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House of Representatives

The House met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SHULER).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
January 23, 2007.

I hereby appoint the Honorable HEATH SHULER to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker, House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) for 5 minutes.

DELEGATE VOTING

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, what if I were to tell you that non-Members of the House of Representatives were about to be given a vote right here in the House? You would say no, can't happen, right? Well, hold on, because it's about to happen and it's about to happen this week.

This week is a remarkable week; it should be a time of great anticipation, the State of the Union, we've got incredible and remarkable challenges that face our Nation. But at home, when I go home, people are kind of

wondering out loud, what's going on up there in Washington? There is skepticism about the Six for '06, you know, the things that the Democrat majority adopted in their vaunted first 100 hours, albeit under an unfair process and with no input from either their new Members or the minority. Really a clear abuse of power. But the explanation was, well, we ran on these issues, everyone knew they were coming, they endorsed them in the election.

Now, regardless of the truthfulness of that statement, most folks just kind of shake their head, and most in the press have given the Democrats the benefit of the doubt, and that's all right. There is a basic sense of, you know, it's tough to believe that they would violate so many principles coming right out of the chute.

And then yesterday we had a suspension bill; that is a bill that is brought to the floor of the House that requires a supermajority, two-thirds, in order to pass. And by tradition, it is brought to the floor because it has got an overwhelming amount of support, with the full knowledge of both the majority and the minority. And yesterday, a bill that virtually everyone here supports, removing Federal pensions from Members of Congress who are convicted of a felony, was brought to the floor and amended or changed twice within a few minutes before even reaching the floor. Now this is fairly esoteric stuff; however, it is important because it demonstrates the unfair process, the abuse of the rules and the abuse of power.

And now we have another in what seems to be this daily event of power-hungry Democrat majorities to give non-Members of the House a vote on this floor. It is a move that they tried the last time they were in control, a move that generated some interesting headlines—"Have the Democrats No Shame?" "The Democrats' Greedy Power Grab," "Power Grab in the

House." And these are from the New York Times and the Chicago Tribune and the Washington Post, not this year, but in 1992.

Now the issue is whether or not to allow non-Members of the House of Representatives, specifically the Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico, and the Delegates from Guam, the Virgin Islands, the District of Columbia and American Samoa the privilege to vote during the Committee of the Whole on this floor of the House. Mr. Speaker, this is outrageous; it is an incredible, phenomenal move in both process and in substance.

Once again, now becoming the routine, this bill, scheduled to come to the floor of the House tomorrow, has had no committee hearing, no debate, no opportunity to amend, no democracy. I assure you, this is not the kind of change that the American people voted for last November.

The Constitution states that the House shall be composed of, quote, "Members chosen by the people of the several States," not Delegates representing non-State territories. It is an unconstitutional power grab, a plan that runs roughshod over the constitutional principle of one person, one vote. One of these territories has 57,000 residents, compared to the 650,000 in my district. These individuals could vote to raise your taxes, Mr. Speaker, without paying taxes themselves.

Clearly the plot by the Democrats is to slip this through during the week of the State of the Union when they think no one is paying attention. This is an unconscionable action, it is a violation of trust and a clear abuse of power.

Under the Democrat plot and logic, they could seat and allow anyone that the majority desires in the House. Who's next, Mr. Speaker? Howard Dean? Does he get a vote in the House?

The American people are disgusted with this level of arrogance and abuse of power.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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The oath that all of us took just a few weeks ago, we all pledged to uphold the Constitution of the United States; this proposal belies that oath.

I urge my Democrat colleagues to regain some sense of propriety, some sense of history, some sense of rectitude. When you trample on the Constitution, when you use the Constitution as a doormat and not the foundational document of our wonderful representative democracy, you do great harm to our Nation.

ELIMINATING POVERTY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, last week, on the night of the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, I attended a truly amazing event in the West Side Community Center in Asbury Park, New Jersey.

The city of Asbury Park is in my congressional district, and has been plagued in recent months by gang violence. It is a phenomenon shared by many New Jersey municipalities, including my hometown of Long Branch nearby, which recently witnessed several gang murders.

Mr. Speaker, redevelopment has come to Asbury Park, all the outward signs are of a seaside resort that is coming back big time. So why, you might ask, the gang violence? Why the murders? One of which took place right in front of the West Side Community Center where the Dr. King celebration took place. The truth is that the plight of the have-nots, that other America, has gotten worse in the last few years.

The event was organized by the Reverend Kevin Nunn, leader of Spirit of Truth World Vision Outreach in Asbury Park. More than 15 local clergy testified to the difficulty of young people in getting an education, avoiding drugs, and preventing a return to prison because of lack of economic opportunities. The recreation programs which had been the backbone of the West Side Community Center are at risk because of lack of funding.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the most important theme I can convey about Monday night's event was the message of hope. Dr. King was invoked as the example of love, peace and harmony among those of all races and creeds, and he was a symbol that pervaded the audience as the speakers talked about the need to vote, to go to church and unite as a committee. Reverend Nunn and most of the clergy who spoke at this meeting are directly involved in bringing shelter to the homeless, food to the needy, and promoting economic opportunity.

The people present Monday night are proud Americans, but they need help. They are certainly not looking to government to solve all their problems, but they believe that government can

make a difference, and it is up to us as their representatives to make the changes necessary so they can continue to have hope.

Mr. Speaker, Senator BOB MENENDEZ and I will soon introduce legislation to address the issue of gang violence. The bills will have three main goals. Our first goal is to provide after-school programs for students so they have a place to go instead of joining a gang. The type of recreation and mentor programs that were discussed in Asbury Park at the community meeting I attended could benefit from the grant set up by this legislation.

The second goal is to prevent recidivism, the idea that people who leave jail don't get caught up in a gang once again because they have no job, no family or home to return to after jail. The legislation expands adult and juvenile offender demonstration projects to help with post-release housing and promote programs that hire former prisoners.

And last, the administration addresses better police enforcement as well as gang suppression initiatives. At the Asbury Park meeting, the cries of "Stop the Violence" came up repeatedly. The legislation will direct more resources to towns to create a new COPS grant program and put more police on the street. Penalties will increase for those convicted of gang crimes, and particularly those using firearms, and communities would be empowered to create their own task forces to implement antigang initiatives.

Now all of these ideas require more dollars, and on the day when President Bush is making his State of the Union address, I want to make one very serious point about Federal resources. We can't, as a nation, continue to escalate the war in Iraq with no positive consequences for America at a continued drain of hundreds of billions of dollars. President Bush needs to reverse course and redeploy our troops out of Iraq. The money and manpower are not only needed on the fight against terrorism elsewhere, for example, in Afghanistan, but also at home, to fight the criminals on our streets. The need is not only for more policemen, but for the housing, health care education and life support needs that will make it possible to get rid of the poverty that I saw on Martin Luther King Day in my community of Asbury Park.

DELEGATE VOTING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, this week House Democrats are pushing forward a measure allowing Delegates to cast votes even on the House floor, even in this chamber.

Now, what is happening here is a continuation of a policy that the Demo-

crats have put in place since day one, and that is an abuse of power. This proposal this week means that Delegates from Guam, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and my favorite, American Samoa, will enjoy new voting privileges similar to Members of Congress who actually represent districts in the United States and who actually represent districts with tax-paying citizens of the United States. This is a clear abuse of power.

And beyond that, as we all know, there is this little thing called the Constitution, and the Constitution says very clearly, the House shall be comprised of Members chosen by the people of the several States, not territories, not any member who wishes to come to this House floor and vote, but those elected by the citizens of the United States from districts in the United States.

What the Democrats are trying to do here is cushion their numbers. There is a tight majority here in the House that the Democrats have, and they are trying to add to those numbers so that when they have tough votes on the House floor, they can look up and point to a better number for their side than for the Republican side.

Beyond that, 80 percent of the Delegates from these territories are Democrats. Let's think this thing through. I think it is starting to make sense now, Mr. Speaker. There is an abuse of power that is continuing in the third week of Congress that began even before its first day. And let me tell you what is so perplexing about this, is that while my constituents have to pay Federal income tax in order to have their representation in Congress, the Delegates from the territories represent constituents who never have to pay Federal income tax. While the Revolutionary War was fought over this idea of taxation without representation, what we have here today with this Delegate voting is representation without taxation. I think that would be great for my constituents in western North Carolina; I think it would be great for all of America if we don't have to pay Federal income tax and still have our power and our elected democracy, but that is not the case.

But let's rewind. Just 2 weeks ago, the new Speaker of the House pushed forward a new minimum wage bill, a minimum wage bill that covered all of America and all of the territories, save one, American Samoa. The largest employer in American Samoa is headquartered in no other district than the Speaker's home district in San Francisco. I think something smells fishy. That is what I said at the time. And I think this is another fishy favor to the Delegates from the territories. It is quite perplexing, Mr. Speaker, that in week three we have a continued abuse of power on this House floor.

But let's go back, let's rewind. What else have the Democrats done in their short time in power to abuse the power that the American people gave them?

Well, let's look at this: On opening day, we proposed the Pelosi minority bill of rights, the same bill of rights that the Democrats demanded 2 years ago. We proposed the same thing, and the Speaker summarily dismissed it. Look at the 9/11 Commission, they pledged to implement all of the 9/11 Commission recommendations, and they went back on that pledge. A 5-day workweek, that was a key pledge they made during the campaign, and after the campaign they said this House will work 5 days a week. We have yet to work a 5-day workweek. In fact, last Friday we voted on only one bill.

And also, in 3 weeks in Congress, we only worked 40 hours in those 3 weeks. Another abuse of power, Mr. Speaker.

And finally, when they talk about keeping votes open in order to change the outcome; they have already done that, which is another abuse of power.

Mr. Speaker, this Delegate voting is something fishy, and it is another fishy favor put forward by the new Speaker of the House and the new Democrat majority in order to pad their number and further abuse power. We should reject it, and the American people who pay taxes should be angry at this proposal.

THE BIKE CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I find it somewhat amusing listening to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle fulminating against the notion that we would allow Delegates to participate in our deliberations of the Committee of the Whole. Obviously the people either haven't read the proposal, or they don't care about what the content is, because these are duly elected representatives that we are proposing to be able to enter into efforts only under operation as Committee of the Whole. While they are signaling their intent, how they would vote, that if at any point they provide the margin that would change the outcome, we provided for a revote. So we are protecting the integrity of the House, it is just when we are operating in the Committee of the Whole, and it is to give voice, for example, to the Republican Delegate from Puerto Rico who represents 4 million people who do pay taxes, who fight in our wars; Delegate ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON, who represents full tax-paying citizens of the District of Columbia who have been disenfranchised. In effect we have a tax-paying colony of United States citizens. That is our Nation's capital. It is shameful that ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON hasn't been extended full voting status, but we will work on that ultimately by changing the Constitution.

Until that day comes, this represents a reasonable compromise to give voice to the men and women who are Dele-

gates, who play an important role, including Puerto Rico, a Republican Delegate, and ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON, who represents American citizens disenfranchised in the District.

Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today on a somewhat lighter note. While we are dealing with affairs of state, we are going to hear partisan bickering back and forth. We are going to be dealing with major issues or war and peace and global warming. We also have an opportunity this week to reinstitute a tradition that continues to unify and uplift Congress, and I am speaking about bike-partisanship. The last 15 years have signaled a renaissance in cycling—the feats of Greg LaMond and Lance Armstrong in the Tour de France; Americans using over a hundred million bicycles around the country; the landmark ISTEIA legislation reauthorizing the Surface Transportation Act that since 1991 has directed \$8 billion to biking and walking and trail activities, \$4.5 billion in the last bill alone, another record.

We are working for ways to enhance the status of people who burn calories, not oil, people who take up less space on congested roadways, do not contribute to air pollution, and simplify the parking problems faced by more Americans.

It is not just better for the cyclists, but it is better for the motorists who don't have the cyclists competing with them. It is better for the health of Americans. We know that we are dealing with an issue of obesity in America, a lack of exercise. Think right now how many Americans are stuck in traffic on their way to ride an exercise bike at a health club.

Well, we have an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, by enlisting friends on both sides of the aisle to rejoin the Congressional Bicycle Caucus. I strongly urge that my colleagues respond to the invitation that is going out today along with my co-chairman, Tom Petri, a great member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, to join with us. Last session we had over 160 bike-partisan members from both parties who dealt with issues of transportation. We have done activities that involve members and staff and family. We urge fellow members to sign up now to be ready for the hundreds of cyclists that will join us for the annual Bicycle Summit in March. This is one activity that brings us together that all people can benefit from, and they will be entitled to their membership pin in the Congressional Bicycle Caucus.

I strongly urge that we take these steps for a healthier America, for an environmentally sensitive America, for an America where children can get to school safely on their own, and that we are able to live a little lighter on the land.

STATEMENT ON PRESIDENTIAL PARDON FOR TWO U.S. BORDER PATROL AGENTS IN FEDERAL PRISON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, now is a critical time in the case of two United States Border Patrol agents. Last week, the agents turned themselves in to U.S. marshals to begin serving 11 and 12 years, respectively, in Federal prison. U.S. Border Patrol agents Ramos and Compean were convicted last spring for wounding a Mexican drug smuggler who brought 743 pounds of marijuana across our southern border into Texas. The agents fired shots during a foot chase with the smuggler, who had fled in a van they were pursuing. The van contained approximately \$1 million worth of marijuana.

Mr. Speaker, after months of silence, the President recently said in a television interview that he would take a sober look at the case and a tough look at the facts to see whether the agents should be pardoned. For the agents' safety, I am hopeful that the President of the United States will look into this case as soon as possible.

The facts will tell the President what countless citizens and Members of Congress already know, that the United States Attorney's office was on the wrong side in this case. Compelling physical evidence—the angle of the bullet that struck the drug smuggler—makes it clear that the smuggler was pointing something at the agents as he ran away and the agents fired in self-defense. Yet the U.S. Attorney's office prosecuted the agents almost exclusively on the testimony of an admitted drug smuggler who claimed he was unarmed. Despite claims of insufficient evidence, the fact that the U.S. Attorney's office and Office of Inspector General were able to track down this smuggler in Mexico proves that they had enough evidence to tie him to the drug load, but they chose not to prosecute him. Instead, Mr. Speaker, the United States Attorney's office prosecuted the agents and granted immunity to the drug smuggler for his testimony against our border agents. That is absolutely unacceptable.

The drug smuggler received full medical care in El Paso, Texas, was permitted to return to Mexico, and is now suing the Border Patrol for \$5 million for violating his civil rights. Contrary to the claims of the United States attorney, there is no law that requires the government to give medical assistance to injured illegal aliens. This drug smuggler is not an American citizen. He is a criminal. Since the agents were convicted, three of the 12 jurors have submitted sworn statements that they were misled into believing that there

could be no dissent in the jury's decision and therefore believed that they had to give in to the majority opinion of guilt. Still, the judge refused to overturn the verdict.

Mr. Speaker, the extraordinary details surrounding the prosecution of this case assures that justice has not been served. For the sake of the agents and their families and for the sake of the American people who they were working to protect, I encourage the President to review the facts of this case as soon as possible. In addition to the 250,000 petitions that have been collected on behalf of the agents, the American people and Members of Congress should encourage the President to review this case. I hope that the Members of Congress and the American people will call the White House and ask the President to immediately reverse this injustice by pardoning these two innocent men.

STATE OF THE UNION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Ms. SOLIS. Last November, the American people demanded a dramatic change at home and abroad. Now in the majority, Democrats in Congress are delivering on that promise. With the State of the Union address to be held tonight, President Bush can demonstrate that he has listened to the American public and is ready to work with the Congress on these priorities. On critical issues from Iraq to energy independence, it is time to take America in a new direction.

On security and Iraq. President Bush likes to make promises in the State of the Union addresses, he just doesn't always keep those promises. The President has promised the American people to strengthen America's security. Unfortunately, his policies have made the world more dangerous and America less safe. Now he wants to escalate the war in Iraq over the overwhelming opposition of the American public and many of his own generals. Unfortunately, President Bush's plan to escalate the war in Iraq will not bring success in Iraq or make America safer. It will receive an up-or-down vote in both chambers of Congress. We will always put our troops first, and that means holding the President accountable for those changes that he wants to provide.

Democrats have a plan for success that will make America safer and bring our troops home. Shifting the principal mission of our forces from combat to training, logistics, force protection and activities to counter terrorism; beginning the phased deployment of our forces in the income tax 4 to 6 months; and implementing an aggressive diplomatic strategy both within the region and beyond to help the Iraqis achieve a sustainable political settlement, including amending their constitution.

On economic security. Last November, the American people demanded real results to improve their everyday lives and strengthen middle-class families. Today, President Bush has the opportunity to talk about a change of action there and work in a bipartisan way with those of us that are here serving in the House.

In its first 100 hours, the House of Representatives succeeded in passing legislation to raise the minimum wage, expand Federal funding for stem cell research, implement recommendations of the bipartisan 9/11 Commission, require negotiations for lower prescription drug costs, make college more affordable for many, many families, and end subsidies for Big Oil to invest in clean renewable energy. These 100-hour bills are just the beginning. The new Congress will do more to take America in a new direction.

On health care. President Bush's health insurance proposal is a tax hike on the middle class of our country. It will do little to help the uninsured and will undermine the health insurance of those lucky enough to have it already. In the same year that President Bush is once again submitting a budget making his tax cuts permanent—tax cuts that go overwhelmingly to the richest Americans—he is proposing to shift more of the cost of health care onto working families. Under President Bush's leadership, the Nation's health insurance crisis has actually worsened, costs are up and the number of uninsured Americans has grown. This latest proposal is another step in the wrong direction.

On energy independence. Key to our national security and our economic security is energy independence. Last year in the State of the Union address by the President, he declared that we were addicted to oil. One week later in his annual budget, he shortchanged the development of alternative fuels and technologies needed to make America energy independent. As you know, Democrats are already putting America on a path to energy independence by cutting huge subsidies to Big Oil and investing in the alternative fuels and technologies needed to protect our national security, our economy and our environment. The science of global warming and its impact is overwhelming, as you know. The American public understands the urgency of the problem. We want to work with President Bush in a bipartisan fashion but we can't wait for him to put science before special interests.

Democrats will listen to what President Bush has to say today and we hope he will listen to the American public. It is time for all of us to work together for a new direction for all Americans.

THE INFORMED CHOICE ACT, H.R.

223

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of Janu-

ary 4, 2007, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday there was a pro-life rally here in Washington, DC. In fact, the 22nd annual rally. I thought I would take a moment and talk about some of the innovations involved with ultrasound equipment which is very beneficial for women who are pregnant who wish to look at the fetus.

Recently, my colleagues, National Geographic presented a 2-hour program charting the fetal development of several mammals with the use of new generation ultrasound imagery. Physicians created a stunning portrait of a mammal in utero, but just imagine the reaction of parents today when viewing a 3-D fetal snapshot of their unborn son or daughter smiling back at them.

Professor Stuart Campbell, one of the world's leading experts in obstetrics, believes that ever improving imagery, particularly moving from 3-D to 4-D scanning, which are inching closer and closer to actually displaying real-time movements, represents the tip of the iceberg for fetal behavior study.

As with these amazing images, ultrasound technology provides parents-to-be with a window into the womb which can result in a stronger parent-child bond, better prenatal treatment and also supply doctors with obviously an advanced understanding of fetal development and behavior.

Today's ultrasound equipment is better than ever and the technology will improve even better over time. Such images allow physicians to readily identify critical health problems such as spina bifida, heart complications, neural tube defects, and genetic syndromes. Ultrasound imagery brings many benefits to women, their unborn children and, of course, to our health care system in general. Continued research, breakthrough developments, and preventative care could save millions of dollars.

Public health advocates know that access to early, high-quality prenatal care is key to maternal and newborn health. Therefore, this prenatal care should include ultrasound equipment. Sonograms can diagnose serious complications that can be easily avoided if discovered early on during a pregnancy. Four-dimensional imaging shows objects in 3-D moving close to real time. Doctors have long known that fetuses move, but the physical behavior revealed by these scans is expanding upon their knowledge exponentially. The possibilities of improving the health of women and their unborn children are endless.

Mr. Speaker, these advanced ultrasound images can give women an opportunity for better prenatal health and decrease risks during pregnancy not only for themselves but obviously for their unborn child. Unfortunately, there are a lot of women today that cannot afford access to this critical medical service. These underprivileged

women do not have the option of safeguarding their health and prenatal well-being. Therefore, I have introduced the Informed Choice Act, H.R. 223. This legislation authorizes Health and Human Services to establish simple grants for not-for-profit and community-based health clinics to purchase ultrasound equipment. The centers that purchase these machines will be able to provide free examinations to women who are unable to obtain access to this critical care. That is, women that are poor. Each year, these pregnancy centers serve hundreds of thousands of women, ranging from girls barely in their teens to women in their mid to late thirties. Many of these women are among the poorest of the poor. For them, the free care that they receive is an essential lifeline. Access to ultrasound equipment is clearly one of the best things that this Congress can do to promote women's health and prenatal care.

Women understand the importance of ultrasound equipment. A recent poll confirms this. In order to provide women in crisis pregnancies with sufficient prenatal care and the full scope of information about their pregnancy, I urge my colleagues today to cosponsor my legislation. It is clear that these women view ultrasounds as an essential resource, a resource for women who are faced with unplanned pregnancies struggling with that prime decision. Additionally, the Focus on the Family organization found that an overwhelming 84 percent of women surveyed decide against abortion after viewing an ultrasound of their unborn baby.

Women have a right to know what is going on during their pregnancy. These ultrasound images, specifically with the 3-D and 4-D technology, depict fetuses beyond 24 weeks sucking their thumbs, sticking their tongues out and even making emotional faces.

So again, my colleagues, I urge you to join me in protecting the health of women and their unborn children by cosponsoring the Informed Choice Act, H.R. 223. This bill is about giving vulnerable women the information they need about their pregnancy and making this critical technology available to all Americans.

WHEN THEY COME HOME: MEETING THE MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF OUR TROOPS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. TIM MURPHY) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, over 17 percent of soldiers returning from Iraq, higher than any other measured military conflict, meet the criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD. Predeployment mental health screening, availability of treatment, perception toward treat-

ment and public attitudes of the soldiers' actions all affect the vulnerability and prognosis for this disorder.

PTSD is a severe anxiety disorder that develops after a traumatic event involving physical danger. It is also called "shell shock" or "battle fatigue" in other wars and is particularly prevalent among soldiers who have experienced wartime combat. Symptoms can include insomnia, irritability, inability to concentrate, panic, terror, dread, despair, grief and include daytime recollections, traumatic nightmares or combat flashbacks. Most persons exposed to severe trauma do not develop symptoms. Onset can be immediate but more commonly occurs from a few months to years after the event.

Currently, the Department of Defense provides mental health services for 180 days following discharge and the VA offers its health care services, including mental health, to veterans at no cost for 2 years following discharge. Afterwards, veterans may continue to receive mental health treatment but are subject to copayments.

Unit support while still deployed helps reduce symptom risk. Once soldiers return home these supports end, but ongoing support is essential to reduce the risk, from families, friends, veterans, the VA and our society as a whole. Many with early symptoms of PTSD, however, isolate from social contact and do not benefit from these supports.

In the current war in Iraq, unlike Vietnam, society as a whole is generally able to separate support for the soldier from support for the war. However, as criticism for the war increases and the public questions the purpose and outcome of this war, a significant question remains as to the impact upon the soldier's mental health of these expressions of doubt. For those at risk for PTSD and since hopelessness may raise the risk, society's comments of the situation may increase the soldier's sense of personal blame and lead the soldiers to question if they did their job well. Or they may develop a sense of worthlessness and guilt that their fellow soldiers lost their lives for a cause that was not supported by the country. Further research must be done to explore this link, but it also raises an important issue. Not only is there a concern for a stigma for the war action itself but also getting help. The majority of soldiers who need treatment for PTSD and mental health symptoms do not seek help for fear of being seen as weak, for fear of being treated differently by their commander, or fear of future harm to their career.

Pictures, commentary and news coverage of this war affects not only recent combat veterans but extends to those of prior wars. A survey of 70 Vietnam veterans stated that 57 percent reported flashbacks after watching reports about this war on television, and almost half faced sleep disorders.

Mr. Speaker, there is a need for specialized military mental health serv-

ices. As of May last year, of the 5 percent of Iraq and Afghanistan soldiers who may have been at risk, only 22 percent sought help from mental health providers. The rest sought help from primary care doctors, many without mental health training.

The National Defense Authorization Act of last year created the defense task force on mental health. Within a year, they are to submit a report to us with a long-term plan to improve the effectiveness for Armed Forces who have experienced multiple deployments. But Congress can improve the Department of Defense referral process for mental health evaluations by psychiatrists/psychologists to better meet the needs of our troops. As chronic PTSD symptoms can continue for years, the VA should extend the 2-year universal coverage period for mental health services for our Nation's soldiers when they return from active duty and combat. And we need to study the effects of the 24-hour media exposure on the occurrence of PTSD symptoms upon returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan. Congress can also increase public awareness of PTSD to reduce the stigma for returning veterans and for them to take advantage of mental health services at the VA.

Working together, we can ensure that none of our Nation's veterans suffering with PTSD are left behind, but above all as Members of Congress we have to make sure that the things we do and say respond to the caveat to first do no harm.

DELEGATE VOTING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the time and the opportunity to talk with my colleagues about an issue that is of tremendous importance to us. It is certainly one that I have heard from from my constituents in Tennessee's Seventh Congressional District. They are quite concerned about this. It seems that all of a sudden last week, outside of regular order, outside of the normal committee process, an old idea resurfaced and came before this body in the form of a piece of legislation that is not going through regular order, is not going through the committee process. And I had many constituents who were quite concerned about this, and how could a bill that is important to us, important to our Nation, important to our structure and our way of governing come before us without people being aware? This issue is the issue of delegate voting. We are going to hear more about this today and tomorrow. Then the Democrat majority is going to push this to the floor for a vote so that they can circumvent what is the constitutional underpinning of this great Nation.

Now, we as Republicans believe in the constitutional principle of one person, one vote. We think that that is important. It is important to adhere to that, that everyone is equal under the law. Everyone is entitled to their vote, everyone is entitled to that representation of one person, one vote. And to change that principle and allow delegate voting would require an amendment of the Constitution. That is not a statement that comes only from me but the Democrats can look at their former Speaker of the House, Tom Foley, who is on record in 1970 when this old issue came up at that point. In 1970, former Speaker of the House Tom Foley, a Democrat from Washington State said, and I am quoting, it is very clear that a constitutional amendment would be required to give delegates a vote in the Committee of the Whole, which is the full House.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this act by the Democrats is nothing more than an unconstitutional power grab that they want in order to be able to further their agenda. So we feel that it is important to stand against this. We feel that it is also important that we look at the Constitution, when it says that the House shall be composed of Members chosen by the people of the several States, not delegates representing the non-State territories. There is a distinction here. There is a bright line here.

We also feel like that it is important to note that this plan would run over that tenderly held principle of one person, one vote. The average congressional district has approximately 650,000 people. Mine in Tennessee has a little bit more than that. We know that Speaker PELOSI's has 640,000 people. But we also know that American Samoa has 57,000 people, the Virgin Islands 108,000, and Guam 155,000. So the Delegates that represent those numbers of individuals could vote to raise your taxes, but—and this is another point that concerned my constituents—they would not have to pay them. So their Delegates can vote to raise the taxes of my constituents in Tennessee but those Delegates' constituents wouldn't have to be paying the taxes. They get benefits, they want a vote, they want to use that money. They are just not having to pay the taxes.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I do believe that this is something that many people would say, well, if we're going to have equity under the law, if they're not going to have to pay though those taxes, if they're going to have a Congressman for 57,000 people and they have their vote for 57,000 or 108,000 or 155,000, then why don't we just change the rules for everybody? The answer to that, Mr. Speaker, we know is because this Constitution means something. This is a Nation of laws. It is a Nation that is built on the rule of law. And to give Delegates the right to vote is inappropriate. It is a circumvention of our law. It is a violation of our Constitution.

Now, we know that the Democrat leadership is trying to ram this through the House and there are some reasons for doing this. They feel like they can literally do it on the sly this week. Tonight is the State of the Union. They feel like they can do this in the shadow of the State of the Union without going through the process of the committees, without going through the process of amending the Constitution. We also know that they would choose to do it before they establish regular order.

Mr. Speaker, you know, we have not been in the committee process. The committees have not been functioning. We have been having bills come straight to the floor without the due diligence and the oversight that is done by the committees. We know the Democrats would choose to circumvent that process and pass this before regular order is established. It is an issue of great concern. I appreciate very much that my constituents have been involved in the issue.

HOPING FOR LESS TALK AND MORE ACTION FROM WHITE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentleman from New York (Mr. McNULTY) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. McNULTY. Mr. Speaker, the President is going to come here tonight and by all indications he is going to call for a new era of cooperation. I hope that comes to pass. But that is not his record. On Iraq, he continues to ignore the American people, both parties in this Congress, and even his own generals. And our troops continue to suffer the consequences.

On energy policy, I have been in this chamber for the last several years when the President has spoken, I believe eloquently, about the need to develop alternative sources of energy. Then he gave huge multibillion-dollar tax cuts to the oil companies.

Health insurance is also a subject he is going to address tonight. In the words of former Governor Al Smith of New York, "Let's look at the record." When this President took office, there were 39 million people uninsured in this country. Today that number is 47 million, up by 8 million people. We're going in the wrong direction.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that in the year 2007, from the White House and from this administration, we get less talk and more action.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 18 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until noon.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord God, King of the universe, Creator of all, tonight television cameras and media from around the world will be focused on this Chamber, where President George W. Bush, 43rd President of the United States of America, will address a joint session of the 110th Congress in his State of the Union.

Holding the office of the highest authority in the land and elected by the people of this Nation, he has become a world figure whose words and actions draw the attention of peoples worldwide and will shape the human events of our time. Thereby, he is so deserving of our prayer today and every day. We owe him our prayerful support as free citizens who pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

Lord God, bless, protect and guide our President, for Divine Providence has called him at this moment to be a living symbol of free democracy and a blessing for this Nation and for the world. Grant him health, wisdom and strength.

For You, O Lord God, give strength and power to Your people, both now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a concurrent resolution of the House of the following title:

H. Con. Res. 38. Concurrent resolution providing for a joint session of Congress to receive a message from the President.

The message also announced that pursuant to section 8002 of title 26,

United States Code, the Chair, on behalf of the Committee on Finance, announces the designation of the following Senators as members of the Joint Committee on Taxation:

The Senator from Montana (Mr. BAUCUS).

The Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER).

The Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CONRAD).

The Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY).

The Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH).

PRESIDENT NEEDS TO GET SERIOUS ABOUT ADDRESSING NATION'S HEALTH CARE NEEDS

(Mr. SIREs asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SIREs. Madam Speaker, the skyrocketing price of health care continues to be a major concern for millions of Americans. Skyrocketing costs are causing the number of uninsured Americans to increase by 1 million people every year since the President took office.

Last year, during his State of the Union Address, the President promised his administration would "confront the rising cost of health care, strengthen the doctor-patient relationship, and help people afford the insurance coverage they need." The President did not live up to his promise.

Madam Speaker, the President can no longer afford to provide lip service on health care. The proposal that the President will unveil tonight will do nothing to lower health care costs, nor will it provide health insurance to more Americans. He should reject this proposal and instead work with this Democratic Congress to help come up with real health care solutions.

CONDEMNING THE BRUTAL MURDER OF HRANT DINK

(Mr. ROYCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ROYCE. Madam Speaker, I rise to condemn the brutal murder of newspaper editor and leading figure in the Armenian genocide debate in Turkey, Hrant Dink.

Last Friday freedom of speech suffered a setback as Dink was shot three times in the head in broad daylight outside of his office. As a Turkish citizen of Armenian descent, he had gained notoriety in Turkish society for the court cases brought against him, in which he faced jail time for simply talking of that genocide. Nationalists see such statements, they say, as insults to the honor of Turks.

Well, Dink was mourned worldwide, and journalists like him and Nobel Laureate Orhan Pamuk continue to be persecuted by suppressive laws that seek to stifle discussion on matters that are claimed to be insulting to Turkish identity.

It is my sincere hope that the Turkish Government uses this tragedy to revisit its laws and open up to free speech. The laws themselves are a catalyst for this type of intolerance.

STATE OF UNION ADDRESS PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY TO BEGIN WORKING IN BIPARTISAN FASHION

(Mr. BRALEY of Iowa asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Madam Speaker, last November the American people demanded real results to improve their everyday lives and strengthen middle-class families. Tonight President Bush has the opportunity to change course and work in a bipartisan way to deliver results for America's families.

The new Democratic Congress has not waited for the President to ask. In our first 100 hours, this House has already succeeded in passing legislation to raise the minimum wage, expand Federal funding for stem cell research, implement the recommendations of the bipartisan 9/11 Commission, require negotiation for lower prescription drug costs, make college more affordable and end subsidies for Big Oil to invest in clean, renewable energy.

Tonight I would hope that the President would voice support for these popular bills. After all, they received strong bipartisan support here in the House. On average, 67 Republicans supported each of these bills.

The Democratic Congress looks forward to working with the President to take America in a new direction, but in order to do that, the President needs to realize that he cannot continue down the same road he has traveled for the last 6 years. We will see tonight if he has learned that lesson.

CONGRESS NEEDS TO PASS THE SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY SELF-DETERMINATION ACT

(Mr. WALDEN of Oregon asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Madam Speaker, the failure of Congress to reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act amounts to breach of faith to the more than 600 forested counties across America.

For Grant County, Oregon, where 61 percent of the land in the county is Federal, this means the school district will now be forced to eliminate essential school programs and nearly double class sizes, delay school repairs and begin telling teachers, administrators and staff who gets to stay and who has to go.

School Superintendent Newell Cleaver puts it this way: "We are watching our infrastructure being destroyed as this issue is debated in Congress. This program is the difference between rural

schools remaining competitive with urban schools or not."

Grant County Commissioner Boyd Britton says, "If the Federal Government would simply allow us to manage these natural resources, we would not need these funds. However, losing these funds will be felt by every man, woman and child in the county, especially the school children."

My colleagues, Congress needs to pass H.R. 17 and keep the Federal Government's word to timbered communities and the citizens who live there. Time is running out for them.

TIME TO GET TO THE PEOPLE'S AGENDA

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, President Bush will deliver his State of the Union Address tonight. The American people have been very clear in what they want. They want a change in the tone, they want a change in direction in Iraq, and they want our national priorities to focus on helping families.

The President should use this opportunity to answer some questions. I know my constituents would like to hear three things from the State of the Union: One, how is the President going to work with Congress to really fix this country's broken health care system; two, how is the President going to bring our troops home swiftly and safely; and, three, when is the President really going to return to the domestic priorities.

The Democratically controlled House and Senate are ready for him to change his agenda, change his tone and get to the people's agenda. So tonight we hear from our President.

CONGRESS AND AMERICA MUST BACK AMERICAN TROOPS

(Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I filed a bill to support our troops in harm's way, and I rise in support of them, and in support of this country and this Congress backing our brave men and women in uniform 100 percent.

I fear what all the talk of Washington about pulling funding for our troops is going to do to the privates and sergeants stationed in Camp Blue Diamond, think about it, for the next 11 months.

We are elected to protect our men and women in uniform, just as they protect our freedoms every day. Our guys are fighting for America. They are fighting for you and me.

All this talk of doom and gloom hurts mission success and stifles troop morale. It is imperative our Nation backs our troops to the hilt. As long as we deploy men and women across the

globe, we will never, ever leave a member of our military in harm's way without support. That is our Congress's responsibility.

Our troops are not the enemy. They deserve our full support, and that is why I hope folks will cosponsor my bill to support our troops in harm's way.

BUSH TROOP ESCALATION PLAN IS NOT GOING TO MAKE AMERICA SAFER

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WATSON. Madam Speaker, in past State of the Union addresses, the President has promised the American people that he will strengthen America's security. Unfortunately, his policies have made the world more dangerous and America less safe. Now he wants to escalate the war in Iraq, despite the overwhelming opposition of the American people and many of his own generals.

After years of insisting we "stay the course" in Iraq, the President has finally decided to make a change. Unfortunately, it is one that puts more Americans in danger and further compromises our security here at home. There is no doubt that the war in Iraq was the defining issue during last year's election. Americans overwhelmingly voted in favor of a change in course, but not the one now proposed by President Bush.

Madam Speaker, tonight President Bush has a chance to show he has listened to the American people, his own generals, and Democratic and Republican Members of Congress.

PLEDGING THE SUPPORT OF CONGRESS TO UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES SERVING IN HARM'S WAY

(Mr. NEUGEBAUER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Madam Speaker, I rise today and I am proud to follow my good friend from Texas, Mr. JOHNSON, and support his bill, H.R. 511, to say to those men and women across the world that are defending freedom and democracy on our behalf, we will not let you down; we will support you.

One of the things that there is a lot of debate in this House on and will be is about whether our mission is the right mission or not. But let there be no mistake that we cannot fail in our mission, and we cannot afford for our young men and women to ever doubt that this United States Congress will support them.

Also, I rise to honor today a great American, Roy Velez, Jr., who will be my guest tonight for the President's State of the Union message. Roy paid the ultimate price for our country in that he gave two sons to our efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Madam Speaker, we cannot let our men and women have any doubt of our

support, nor can we let their families doubt the support of this Congress.

So I rise in support and encourage all of my colleagues to support H.R. 511, to say to the men and women and our troops, thank you, God bless you, and we will support you.

TIME TO BRING OUR MISSING CHILDREN HOME

(Mr. LAMPSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. LAMPSON. Madam Speaker, when I last served in Congress, I made it my mission to discuss missing and exploited children at every opportunity, and I rise today to bring attention to the hundreds of thousands of children who go missing annually and to the thousands of children who go missing every day.

Pedro Maldonado is just one of those children. Pedro is missing from Camden, New Jersey. He is 17 years old and was last seen on September 14, last year. At that time he was 5'11" and weighed 180 pounds. He is biracial, white and Hispanic, and has black hair and brown eyes. Pedro has a scar above his right eye and may still be seen in the local area. He may still be in the Camden area and is considered "endangered missing."

Madam Speaker, I ask that anyone who is watching this proceeding, especially if they are in New Jersey or New York, take a moment, look at Pedro's picture to see if you recognize him, and anyone having information should contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at 1-800-THE-LOST or the Camden City Police Department at 856-757-7400.

Madam Speaker, it is time we bring our missing children home.

SUPPORT AMERICAN TROOPS

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, the American soldier has always protected this Nation from those seeking to destroy our freedoms. U.S. soldiers go to the vast plains of combat. These troops forge onward into the fires of battle. They ensure generations of Americans that our interests will be protected around the world. Our volunteers expect their government to support them.

Now some Members of Congress talk of cutting funding to the American soldiers engaged in the desert battles of Iraq, and they want to pull our soldiers out a few at a time. This ill-advised political decision will leave U.S. soldiers abandoned and at the mercy of an enemy that will exploit this weakness.

But this action by Congress is not new. A previous Congress did not like the way a war was going and tried to change the policy and tried to change the plan. That Congress even complained about funds for the war and wanted a new leader.

Good thing that commander pressed on and won the war. He said to those skeptics and cynics in Congress, "We should never despair. Our situation before has been unpromising, and has changed for the better. So it will again." The war was the War for Independence, and the Commander in Chief was George Washington.

And that's just the way it is.

□ 1215

PRESIDENT BUSH EXPECTED TO SPEAK OUT ABOUT GLOBAL WARMING TONIGHT AND NEEDS TO ACT

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Speaker, over the last week, we have heard that President Bush is finally going to admit tonight what most of us have known for many years, that global warming is actually occurring and that we as a Nation need to take action.

Tonight's expected pronouncement from the President is welcome news, but it does not excuse the administration's past record on global warming. Over the last 6 years the Bush administration has served as a major roadblock to reversing dangerous warming trends. The President walked away from international efforts to help reduce the growing danger to our planet, refusing to actually lead on this critically important issue.

In my home State of New Jersey, we are proud of the fact that former Governor Richard J. Codey took decisive action over a year ago to strengthen our State's efforts to combat global warming by classifying carbon dioxide as an air contaminant. This action made New Jersey one of the first States in the Union to take such a step. By contrast, the Bush administration has been in constant denial that environmental dangers to our planet exist. So, therefore, we hope that the Nation will take this seriously.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. JONES of Ohio). Members should not traffic the well while another Member is speaking.

FUNDING FOR TROOPS IN IRAQ

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, efforts to cut off funding for our troops in harm's way is really unacceptable and would be a devastating message for us to send to our men and women in our Armed Forces, to their families, and to the families of our Nation's fallen heroes. No one knows this better

than SAM JOHNSON, our colleague from Texas, who is a true American hero; and I commend him for introducing House Resolution 511. I would commend it to every Member of this body to support.

And I want to say to the Democrats that if they should mean what they say and do what they mean, they really cannot have it both ways on this vote. To vote to support the troops in the field and then not give them the equipment and the supplies and the resources that they need to win is deceptive, it is dangerous, and it puts the lives of American servicemen and -women at risk.

The Democrat majority must understand the stakes in Iraq. Certainly, our constituents understand the stakes that are there, both in the terms of human life and global stability.

I would commend H.R. 511 to our colleagues for support.

PRESIDENT BUSH MUST BEGIN MOVING IN A NEW DIRECTION

(Mr. CARNAHAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CARNAHAN. Madam Speaker, last November the American people demanded dramatic changes and provided a substantial Democratic majority. Since the election, President Bush has yet to show he got the message.

While an overwhelming majority of Americans are demanding that the Iraqi Government take more control, the President has, instead, proposed an escalation plan that flies in the face of military experts, the bipartisan Iraq Study Group, Democrat and Republican leaders in Congress and the American public.

While the President continues his failure to listen when it comes to Iraq, I hope tonight he will actually propose some helpful solutions to some of the most pressing concerns of hardworking middle-class Americans like those I represent in the State of Missouri.

This Democratic House has already produced positive results for the American people, passing our promised 100-hour agenda. I hope the President embraces these policies tonight and shows the American people that he has heard their discontent and plans to work with the Democratic Congress that the American people chose to take us in a new direction.

SUPPORT FOR OUR TROOPS

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I rise today in full support of our troops and H.R. 511, legislation reaffirming Congress's support for the troops deployed in a theater of war. Those overseas protecting us from further terrorist attacks and fighting nobly on the Global War on Terror deserve our steadfast support.

The President has recognized missteps and offered a new direction and plan for victory. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle have yet to address the issue, except to criticize the President's plan before it has even been implemented. It was Leader BOEHNER and the Republican Conference that have called upon the Speaker to create a select committee on oversight to hold the President and Prime Minister Maliki accountable for progress in Iraq.

Madam Speaker, I stand here with pride and offer my full support to the brave soldiers who are helping foster democracy in the Middle East, while, at the same time preventing terrorists from attacking us on our soil. So many Members pledged "We will never forget." Well, that is a promise I made and intend to fulfill.

To our troops, thank you for your dedication, bravery and noble work to make the world and America a better place, following in the footsteps of so many American heroes.

I commend Congressman SAM JOHNSON, an American hero, and urge support of H.R. 511.

THE PRESIDENT SHOULD LISTEN TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

(Mr. MAHONEY of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MAHONEY of Florida. Madam Speaker, I am here today representing Florida's 16th District. Tonight we will listen to the President with the expectation that he will listen to the American people.

Our Nation is facing some of the greatest challenges of our time. From the war in Iraq, to global terrorism, to ending the addiction to foreign oil, the stakes are high and getting higher.

Americans understand the urgency of our challenges. It is time for the President to step up to the plate and offer real solutions that put America on the path to success and security.

I hope the President will offer a new strategy to win the war in Iraq and that that strategy will use diplomacy as its cornerstone, not troop escalation. Let me be clear. I am committed to supporting our brave men and women in uniform, but do not believe their role should be policing a civil war.

We need to turn our energy crisis into an opportunity by investing in domestic production of biofuels and alternative and renewable energies. Last year the President called for an end to America's addiction to oil. And one week later, he cut funding for the development of alternative fuels and energy-efficient technologies. Instead of rhetoric, we need results.

I ask the President to listen to the American people, to the message they sent last November. Our children depend on it.

SEVERE WINTER STORMS IN NEBRASKA

(Mr. SMITH of Nebraska asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Madam Speaker, I rise today to address the serious situation many of my constituents are facing. Recently, a series of severe winter storms and ice storms, more specifically, hit Nebraska, leaving thousands in the Third District without power.

An expedited major disaster declaration for 57 affected counties in Nebraska, almost all in the Third District, was granted, freeing up Federal funds to assist the utility companies and local governments with the immense recovery efforts.

Due to the severity of the storms, thousands of constituents were without power for days and even weeks. They lost wages, food spoiled and expenses began piling up.

During these trying weeks, neighbors, families, friends and strangers have worked together to aid and assist those in need. Donations were made. Generators, gas, food and shelter have poured in to assist those suffering from the effects of the storm.

Utility linemen have been working long hours and even volunteering to repair the shattered grid system.

This difficult time has brought about great personal sacrifice for many Nebraskans, and I strongly commend the volunteers and donors who have come to the aid of those in need.

I urge my colleagues in the House, whether or not your district has been hurt, to remember these folks as we take up tax issues, the AMT and the farm bill.

ENERGY

(Mr. PERLMUTTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker and Members of the House, tonight we will hear the President give his State of the Union address, and I expect and I am confident that he will address energy issues.

I had a meeting this morning with an Assistant Secretary from the Department of Energy, and I believe that we are going to have a chance to have bipartisan effort, Democrats and Republicans, coming together with the President to deal with energy efficiency, renewable energy, and redeveloping and re-energizing our distribution grid throughout the country. This is going to be good for all of America, no matter what side of the aisle you might be on, because it is good for national security. It is good for the climate, and it is good for jobs across this country.

In the Seventh Congressional District of Colorado, which I represent, the suburbs of Denver, we have the pre-eminent laboratory in America and in the world in the National Renewable

Energy Lab. And with this focus on energy conservation, renewable energy and distributing energy in a way that is reliable, we will make this country more secure. And I am confident that the President is going to focus on it, as will we in the Congress.

FUNDING FOR OUR TROOPS

(Mr. HENSARLING asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HENSARLING. Madam Speaker, efforts to cut off funding for our troops in harm's way is simply unacceptable. It would be a devastating message to the brave men and women who serve in our Armed Forces, their families and the families of our Nation's fallen heroes. No one knows this better than SAM JOHNSON, a true American hero, and I commend him on introducing H.R. 511.

It is time for the Democrats to say what they mean and mean what they say. They can't have it both ways. To vote to support troops in the field and then vote not to give them the resources needed to win can be deceptive, dangerous, and could put the lives of American servicemen and -women at even greater risk.

If the Democrat majority does not support the President's plan, they are in the majority, they need to put forth their plan that is in the interest of the American people, and they must also reflect upon the cost of failure. They must understand how high the stakes are in Iraq, both in terms of human life and global stability. Our failure in Iraq could cause the nation to become what Afghanistan once was, a breeding ground for terrorists. Let's work together and find freedom and security in Iraq.

THE STATE OF THE UNION

(Ms. CLARKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. CLARKE. Madam Speaker and my colleagues, the State of the Union?

Mr. President, we are on edge. The American public have said no to the war in Iraq and you have turned a deaf ear to this American admonition.

What does a troop escalation mean to American families?

More of our women and men, sons and daughters, brothers and sister, neighbors and friends will lose their lives or the life of someone they love, more families, such as the family of Operations Specialist Joseph Alomar, who gave his life in honor just this past week, and LCpl Nicholas Whyte, who gave his life this summer. More families, Mr. President, will be mourning. More of the American tax dollars will be spent on the war, rather than on building better schools, hospitals, roads and bridges.

Madam Speaker, in the 11th District of Brooklyn, New York, and in congress-

sional districts around the country, Americans want our troops home.

Mr. President, end this war in Iraq. Redeploy our troops now. We need our domestic tranquility.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Madam Speaker, I wanted to speak today about the debate on the war. And I have the honor of representing Fort Stewart, home of the Third Infantry Division, which is located in Hinesville and Savannah, Georgia.

This month the Third Infantry will start its third deployment to Iraq. And as they go over there, certainly they know what is going on in Washington in terms of the debate. But I think it is real important that we don't send a signal to our men and women in harm's way that what they are doing is irrelevant, that we can't win, and that because Bush might be a President whose policies aren't perfect that we need to withdraw.

In fact, I think what we should do is reaffirm on a bipartisan basis that we support the troops. We want to get them all the up-armored vehicles that they need, the Cougars, for example, blue tracking, the advanced night vision goggles. We should say on a bipartisan basis, we want to give them absolutely all the military hardware that they need to win the war. And then, in a separate debate, have the discussion of what an alternative is, where is the plan of the Bush critics and what is the price of pulling out. And I think we need to make that statement. And I am glad SAM JOHNSON is moving in that direction.

HEALTH CARE IN AMERICA

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, we must seriously begin to address the problem of the Nation's uninsured and the skyrocketing price of health insurance.

Unfortunately, the plan the President is expected to outline tonight will do nothing to cut down on the number of uninsured because a tax deduction simply is not going to be enough to make insurance affordable to low and middle-income workers. In most cases, individual health plans are more expensive to purchase and provide considerably less coverage, but the Bush administration is under the false impression that their tax deduction will pro-

vide enough of an incentive for uninsured workers to sign up.

At the same time, the Bush administration falsely believes they can begin to target the cost of health care premiums by taxing employee-based health benefits. This is nothing more than a tax increase on middle-class workers who have been lucky enough to secure good benefits through their job. Quality health benefits provided by employers should be the norm; and as policymakers, we should not discourage it.

The President's proposal is a non-starter for me, Madam Speaker. But I am hopeful that I can work with the Bush administration to begin to solve some of our health care problems.

□ 1230

IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 511

(Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I rise to associate myself today with the words of my colleague, Mr. SAM JOHNSON from Texas, a Member who can probably speak more eloquently than any Member of Congress on the loneliness, the separation, the uncertainty that is war, and the need to know for such soldiers that the Nation is behind them and supports them.

I have had the honor to travel and visit our troops in Iraq, and I have had the opportunity to visit the troops when they have returned. And in each and every one of them, I have seen their commitment and determination to the completion of their mission.

I have also had the opportunity to be with parents who have lost a son or daughter in the war, to look them in the eye and to hug them during that time, and to be with other parents who were about to see their son and daughter go off to war, and to be with them during those uncertain times.

Madam Speaker, at this point in time, this Nation and this Congress must double its commitment to our troops to make sure that they know that we are behind them and support them for their eventual and soon safe return to their families.

STATE OF THE UNION DOES NOT SUPPORT THE HISPANIC COMMUNITY

(Mr. BACA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BACA. Madam Speaker, tonight the President will give the State of the Union Address. For Hispanics, the State of the Union Address is disappointing. The President has broken his promise on education and cut funding for programs at the expense of Hispanic children. He has failed to support the higher minimum wage, and forced nearly 3 million of our workers to struggle to feed their families.

While Hispanics are fighting and dying in a mistaken war, President Bush still has no plan to make our country safer. Even when the country has cried for a comprehensive immigration reform, the President has failed to lead his own party to make the right course or take the right course of action.

Last November, Hispanics along with all Americans voted for a new direction for America. Thanks to Speaker PELOSI and the Democratic Caucus, half the Hispanic Caucus are now in leadership positions. Ya es tiempo para una nueva direccion! (It's time for a new direction!)

SUPPORT H.R. 511

(Mr. MCHENRY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MCHENRY. Madam Speaker, today I rise to encourage my colleagues to support the troops in harm's way. We are fighting an ongoing war on terror not just in Iraq, but around the globe, and it is immoral for Members of this body to defund troops that are in harm's way.

That is why I commend my colleague SAM JOHNSON for stepping forward, for a resolution saying that we are not going to defund troops in harm's way, that we are going to stand beside them and fight with them in this war on terrorism and this war in Iraq, because, after all, terror is merely a tactic that Islamic extremists are using to fight the West.

As one of the last great powers in this world, we are the embodiment of the West. Therefore the Islamic extremists are seeking to destroy and undermine our society. So now more than ever we have to stand with our troops in harm's way so that they can defend us and make it possible for us to live in a vibrant, free Nation and a great economy.

SUPPORT H.R. 511

(Mrs. BACHMANN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BACHMANN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to let all of our troops serving overseas know that America supports you. Eliminating or cutting funding for our men and women who wear the uniform of the United States is not a recipe for ensuring stability in the Middle East; in fact, it is a recipe for demoralization, and it is irresponsible in its proposal. I urge all Members to support our troops and oppose any effort to cut off or restrict funding for American troops in harm's way, whether in Iraq, in Afghanistan, or elsewhere in the global war on terror.

It is imperative that we fully support those who are on the front lines fighting the war on terror. America thanks you, our brave men and women in uniform.

SUPPORT H.R. 511

(Mr. GOHMERT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of SAM JOHNSON's resolution. I visited this fall with a Specialist William Barth at Walter Reed. I got this e-mail from his father, and I talked to his wife Rachel this morning. They encouraged me to proceed with this.

This is Specialist William Barth. His father said:

I wanted to thank you for visiting my son, Specialist William Barth, at Walter Reed. William was injured by an IED in Iraq around September 8, 2006. He since has recovered from these injuries and he has been redeployed to Iraq. He is heading there now.

William is committed to his job and his fellow soldiers. He could have chosen to stay stateside; however, he felt the job, his job, was not finished. I have another son, Sergeant Aaron Barth, who is equally committed to the cause of freedom. Aaron has already served over a year in Iraq and is preparing to return as well.

Mr. Gohmert, my family is behind the President 100 percent. We are committed to the cause of freedom. Keep up the good work and do not allow anyone to defund the military. The next time you see the President, let him know that fellow Texans are praying for him, for you and for our Nation.

Now, this is support for the troops. That is what we need to be about, not defunding these guys fighting for us.

SUPPORT H.R. 511

(Mr. PRICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in support of H.R. 511 introduced by Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, which says that we ought to pledge the faithful support of Congress to members of the United States Armed Forces serving in harm's way.

Madam Speaker, there are a lot of things we can disagree on on this floor of the House, but cutting funding for our troops ought not be one of them. As many others have done, I have also visited Walter Reed and talked to the brave men and women who have served there, not just from my district, from my State and around the Nation. And when I ask them, is there anything that we can do for you, the vast majority of them say, Congressman, just let me get back to my unit.

Madam Speaker, that sense of duty, that sense of honor, that sense of commitment and that sense of patriotism is something we in Congress would do well to emulate. This resolution says that members of the United States Armed Forces have served honorably in their mission to fight terrorism and protect the greater security of the United States, that these members of the Armed Forces and their families have made many sacrifices. This resolution, Madam Speaker, deserves our support.

OUR TROOPS NEED TO LEAVE
IRAQ

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, so what is the state of our Union? It is war. It is neglect of an overt agenda. The President will come to our country tonight, and he will give us more war, 21,500 troops sent to escalate the war in Iraq, a war that has cost the lives of 650,000 innocent Iraqi civilians.

We need our President to realize that it is time to take a new direction, and that direction is out of Iraq. It is time to end the occupation, to withdraw our troops, to close the bases. It is time for us to work with the international community in an overall peace plan, which I presented to this Congress. The Kucinich plan calls for not only ending the occupation, withdrawing troops, closing the bases, but also an international peace plan that enables the Iraqi people to have the security they need through reconciliations, through reparations, and through paying for reconstruction.

The United States must lead the way with the international community in a plan for peace. The President must take a new direction.

PROVIDING FOR A JOINT SESSION
OF CONGRESS TO RECEIVE A
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. JONES of Ohio). The Chair lays before the House a privileged Senate amendment to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 38) providing for a joint session of Congress to receive a message from the President.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the Senate amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate amendment:
Page 1, line 3, strike out "Wednesday" and insert "Tuesday".

The Senate amendment was concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR AN
ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I send to the desk a privileged concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 41) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the concurrent resolution, as follows:

H. CON. RES. 41

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That when the House adjourns on the legislative day of Wednesday, January 24, 2007, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand adjourned until 2 p.m. on Monday, January 29,

2007, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first; and that when the House adjourns on the legislative day of Wednesday, January 31, 2007, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand adjourned until 2 p.m. on Monday, February 5, 2007, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first.

SEC. 2. The Speaker or her designee, after consultation with the Minority Leader, shall notify the Members to reassemble at such place and time as she may designate if, in her opinion, the public interest shall warrant it.

The concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later today.

SEASONED CUSTOMER CTR EXEMPTION ACT OF 2007

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 323) to amend section 5313 of title 31, United States Code, to reform certain requirements for reporting cash transactions, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 323

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Seasoned Customer CTR Exemption Act of 2007".

SEC. 2. EXCEPTION FROM CURRENCY TRANSACTION REPORTS FOR SEASONED CUSTOMERS.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds as follows:

(1) The completion of and filing of currency transaction reports under section 5313 of title 31, United States Code, poses a compliance burden on the financial industry.

(2) Due to the nature of the transactions or the persons and entities conducting such transactions, some reports as currently filed may not be relevant to the detection, deterrence, or investigation of financial crimes, including money laundering and the financing of terrorism.

(3) However, the data contained in such reports can provide valuable context for the analysis of other data derived pursuant to subchapter II of chapter 53 of title 31, United States Code, as well as investigative data, which provide invaluable and indispensable information supporting efforts to combat money laundering and other financial crimes.

(4) An appropriate exemption process from the reporting requirements for certain currency transactions that are of little or no

value to ongoing efforts of law enforcement agencies, financial regulatory agencies, and the financial services industry to investigate, detect, or deter financial crimes would continue to fulfill the compelling need to produce and provide meaningful information to policy-makers, financial regulators, law enforcement, and intelligence agencies, while potentially lowering the compliance burden placed on financial institutions by the need to file such reports.

(5) The Secretary of the Treasury has by regulation, and in accordance with section 5313 of title 31, United States Code, implemented a process by which institutions may seek exemptions from filing certain currency transaction reports based on appropriate circumstances; however, the financial industry has not taken full advantage of these provisions and has contended that they are unduly burdensome.

(6) The act of providing notice to the Secretary of the Treasury of designations of exemption—

(A) provides meaningful information to law enforcement officials on exempt customers and enables law enforcement to obtain account information through appropriate legal process; and

(B) complements other sections of title 31, United States Code, whereby law enforcement can locate financial institutions with relevant records relating to a person of investigative interest, such as information requests made pursuant to regulations implementing section 314(a) of the USA PATRIOT Act of 2001.

(7) A designation of exemption has no effect on requirements for depository institutions to apply the full range of anti-money laundering controls required under subchapter II of chapter 53 of title 31, United States Code, and related provisions of law, including the requirement to apply the customer identification program pursuant to section 5326 of such title, and the requirement to identify, monitor, and, if appropriate, report suspicious activity in accordance with section 5318(g) of such title.

(8) The Federal banking agencies and the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network have recently provided guidance through the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council Bank Secrecy Act/Anti-Money Laundering Examination Manual on applying appropriate levels of due diligence and identifying suspicious activity by the types of cash-intensive businesses that generally will be subject to exemption.

(b) SEASONED CUSTOMER EXEMPTION.—Section 5313(e) of title 31, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“(e) QUALIFIED CUSTOMER EXEMPTION.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Before the end of the 270-day period beginning on the date of the enactment of the Seasoned Customer CTR Exemption Act of 2007, the Secretary of the Treasury shall prescribe regulations that exempt any depository institution from filing a report pursuant to this section in a transaction for the payment, receipt, or transfer of United States coins or currency (or other monetary instruments the Secretary of the Treasury prescribes) with a qualified customer of the depository institution.

“(2) QUALIFIED CUSTOMER DEFINED.—For purposes of this section, the term ‘qualified customer’, with respect to a depository institution, has such meaning as the Secretary of the Treasury shall prescribe, which shall include any person that—

“(A) is incorporated or organized under the laws of the United States or any State, including a sole proprietorship (as defined in 31 C.F.R. 103.22(d)(6)(vii), as in effect on January 4, 2007), or is registered as and eligible to do business within the United States or a State;

“(B) has maintained a deposit account with the depository institution for at least 12 months; and

“(C) has engaged, using such account, in multiple currency transactions that are subject to the reporting requirements of subsection (a).

“(3) REGULATIONS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall prescribe regulations requiring a depository institution to file a 1-time notice of designation of exemption for each qualified customer of the depository institution.

“(B) FORM AND CONTENT OF EXEMPTION NOTICE.—The Secretary shall by regulation prescribe the form, manner, content, and timing of the qualified customer exemption notice and such notice shall include information sufficient to identify the qualified customer and the accounts of the customer.

“(C) AUTHORITY OF SECRETARY.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may suspend, reject, or revoke any qualified customer exemption notice, in accordance with criteria prescribed by the Secretary by regulation.

“(ii) CONDITIONS.—The Secretary may establish conditions, in accordance with criteria prescribed by regulation, under which exempt qualified customers of an insured depository institution that is merged with or acquired by another insured depository institution will continue to be treated as designated exempt qualified customers of the surviving or acquiring institution.”

(c) 3-YEAR REVIEW AND REPORT.—Before the end of the 3-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Attorney General, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Federal banking agencies, the banking industry, and such other persons as the Secretary deems appropriate, shall evaluate the operations and effect of the provisions of the amendment made by subsection (a) and make recommendations to Congress as to any legislative action with respect to such provision as the Secretary may determine to be appropriate.

SEC. 3. PERIODIC REVIEW OF REPORTING THRESHOLD AND ADJUSTMENT FOR INFLATION.

Section 5318 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(o) PERIODIC REVIEW OF REPORTING THRESHOLD AND ADJUSTMENT FOR INFLATION.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Before the end of the 90-day period beginning on the date of the enactment of the Seasoned Customer CTR Exemption Act of 2007 and at least every 5 years after the end of such period, the Secretary of the Treasury shall—

“(A) review the continuing appropriateness, relevance, and utility of each threshold amount or denomination established by the Secretary, in the Secretary's discretion, for any report required by the Secretary under this subchapter; and

“(B) adjust each such amount, at such time and in such manner as the Secretary considers appropriate, for any inflation that the Secretary determines has occurred since the date any such amount was established or last adjusted, as the case may be.

“(2) REPORT.—Before the end of the 60-day period beginning upon the completion of any review by the Secretary of the Treasury under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit a report to the Congress containing the findings and conclusions of the Secretary in connection with such review, together with an explanation for any adjustment, or lack of adjustment, of any threshold amount or denomination by the Secretary as a result of

such review, including the adjustment for inflation.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) and the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to express themselves on this and to include therein extraneous material.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, this is an example of sensible regulation because sensible regulation includes deregulation when that is appropriate.

The Committee on Financial Services reported this bill out last year. It passed the House. Surprisingly it managed not to make it through the Senate. The efficiency of that body failed us on this occasion apparently, but we are going to try again.

We believe in regulation, and this is an important area where we provide information to our financial detectives, and it is especially important with regard to terrorist financing.

But too much regulation can defeat the purpose for which regulation is intended, and we have a situation now where the banks are required to report every year on customers' transactions of \$10,000 or more. Now, one of the things this bill would do is give the Secretary of the Treasury the authority to increase a dollar figure that has been left unadjusted for inflation for too long.

More importantly, we are talking now about the exemption that is given to what we call seasoned customers of the bank. When the banks are dealing, and this is particularly important for our community bankers, when they are dealing with people whom they know, with whom they have had regular and continuing relationships, having to report every time they do a transaction of \$10,000 or more generates extra work for the bank, and I believe, if anything, interferes with the ability of the regulators to find what they should be looking for.

If we are telling people to find needles, we should not set about building them bigger haystacks. What this bill says is that where we are talking about regular customers, regular seasoned customers, they can apply for the exemption, which is in the control of the Secretary of the Treasury, with careful criteria.

And having received that exemption, as long as they remain seasoned customers of the same bank, that process does not have to be repeated every 2

years. It reduces the regulatory burden on banks, and it is particularly important to small banks.

I would ask at this point, Madam Speaker, under my general leave to include a letter to myself and the gentleman from Alabama from America's Community Bankers strongly endorsing this bill.

AMERICA'S COMMUNITY BANKERS

Washington, DC, January 22, 2007.

Hon. BARNEY FRANK,
Chairman, Financial Services Committee, House
of Representatives Washington, DC.

Hon. SPENCER BACHUS
Ranking Member, Financial Services Committee,
House of Representatives Washington, DC.

Dear Chairman Frank and Ranking Member Bachus: America's Community Bankers is pleased to support H.R. 323, the Seasoned Customer CTR Exemption Act of 2007. The legislation would make important improvements to the current exemption system for cash transaction reports (CTRs) by making it easier to exempt the routine transactions of certain seasoned business customers. H.R. 323 would more appropriately balance the cost and benefits of the Bank Secrecy Act's CTR reporting requirements. The legislation would also reduce the number of CTRs filed on routine transactions of well-known, law abiding customers.

We urge the full House of Representatives to adopt H.R. 323 and look forward to working with you to enact this important legislation.

While we fully support H.R. 323, we urge the Committee to modernize the Bank Secrecy Act further by increasing the \$10,000 threshold that triggers CTR filing. This threshold has not been updated since 1970. Increasing the \$10,000 trigger would more appropriately balance the reporting obligations of depository institutions and the information needs of law enforcement agencies.

Sincerely,

ROBERT R. DAVIS,
Executive Vice President and Managing
Director, Government Relations.

□ 1245

What this will do is to reduce the paperwork burden on the banks; it will ease the burden on the regulators. It will not diminish in any way the flow of information that is needed for those whose job it is to keep us safe.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BACHUS. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING).

Mr. HENSARLING. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I certainly thank him for his leadership in this area to remove some unneeded regulation on our financial institutions. I also want to thank our new chairman, the gentleman from Massachusetts, for his steadfast support on this issue as well.

Madam Speaker, current Federal regulations require financial institutions to file a currency transaction report with the IRS for any customer transaction over \$10,000 during a business day.

We all know that these CTRs, as they are called, are designed to help our Federal law enforcement thwart money laundering and other illegal activities; but the problem is that this \$10,000

threshold which was set in 1970 is so low in the existing exemption process, so cumbersome and costly that it is causing banks to repeatedly file CTRs for many of their known and expected regular business transactions for their well-known customers.

And it doesn't matter if that business has been a so-called "seasoned customer" for the financial institution for 5, 10, 15 or even 20 years. Right now it is simply too difficult for our financial institutions to apply for exemptions for our customers that they know are not a risk. So this forces, Madam Speaker, our financial institutions to file CTRs when they know the customer is not a risk just to protect themselves from legal liability or potential large fines.

And so when law enforcement is looking for a needle in a haystack, our financial institutions are being asked to put more hay on the stack and they are being told to pay for it by taking money away from their local communities that otherwise could be used for local lending. If the financial institutions passed these CTR compliance costs on to customers, through higher fees or higher interest rates, it makes it more difficult for American citizens to save for retirement, finance a child's college education, or launch a small business that creates jobs.

This bill, which I have long supported, will fix this problem by clarifying the existing CTRs filing exemption for seasoned customers. And as a result of this legislation, when passed, a number of the 13 million-plus CTRs filed annually would stop, allowing banks to devote more of their resources to improving other suspicious activity reporting.

The fact remains, Madam Speaker, when we come across a regulation like this, if we cannot determine a compelling reason for it to exist in the modern marketplace, we have a duty to either modify it or eliminate it, and that is what we are doing today.

Congress today can help reduce the cost of banking for customers without jeopardizing critical law enforcement goals. I urge all of my colleagues to support this important bill.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BACHUS. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. GILLMOR).

Mr. GILLMOR. I thank the gentleman for yielding. I would also like to thank my colleagues on the Financial Services Committee for their diligence on this legislation.

This much-needed regulatory relief provision will help reduce unnecessary paperwork for both banks and for their regulators. And by granting an exemption from currency transaction report requirements for seasoned customers, this legislation seeks to streamline the filing of CTRs, which is a critical tool for our law enforcement officials.

There is little doubt that our regulatory structure has contributed to the United States being the model for the world when it comes to financial services; but without constant attention to the burdens of outdated rules and regulations, our markets can be weighted down by unnecessary costs.

I am pleased to see that Congress is tackling the issues of the regulatory burden early in this session, and I look forward to working with Chairman FRANK, Chairman MALONEY, and Ranking Member BACHUS and the other members to look for ways to find sensible regulatory relief for our banks, our thrifts, and our credit unions.

Mr. BACHUS. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. I thank the gentleman.

I, too, rise today in support of H.R. 323, the Seasoned Customer CTR Exemption Act of 2007, legislation which seeks to reduce the regulatory burden caused by the previous Bank Secrecy Act and does so by simplifying exemptions for financial institutions, banks, for example, in their currency transaction reports, their CTRs, on seasoned customers.

You know, while well-intentioned CTRs have imposed a tremendous regulatory burden on financial institutions without a corresponding increase in benefit to our efforts to thwart terrorist attacks, for the most part law enforcement agencies have found these reports to be largely useless in the prevention of crimes and terrorist attacks, while banks have found the filing costs and regulatory burden they create enormous.

Currency transaction reports were created to follow any large transaction through the banking industry to catch money laundering before it became a fait accompli, but the provision that created them is now outdated. What was considered a large amount of money back in 1970 is hardly so today; in fact, the threshold for filing a CTR is \$10,000, which in today's term is close to \$50,000.

So with the provisions caught in time, banks are now locked in a situation by which they are filing CTRs for many everyday transactions; and because of the frequency of these filings, paper overflows and the actual tracking of criminal activity is severely hampered. Potentially criminal transactions that should be setting all alarms with the banks and law enforcement agencies are drowned out in a sea of paperwork.

This legislation then is a good start towards helping reduce regulatory burdens on our Nation's banks and financial institutions, and I therefore encourage all of my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Mr. BACHUS. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. NEUGEBAUER).

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 323, the

Seasoned Customer CTR Exemption Act.

I appreciate the work of Chairman FRANK and Ranking Member BACHUS to introduce this legislation and get it on the floor quickly in this Congress.

The last Congress succeeded in passing some much-needed and long overdue regulatory relief for some of our financial institutions. Unfortunately, the provisions that originally were passed in this body as related to the CTR exemption were not included in that very important legislation.

In passing H.R. 323 today, the House is saying once more that we believe financial institutions, their customers and national security will be better served by exempting institutions from filing CTRs for their very qualified and seasoned customers.

Banks in my district have been telling me for the past few years that this legislation is needed. They tell us about the countless staff hours that it takes to file reports for customers that they have had relationships with for 20, 30 and 40 years just to be in compliance with the current regulation.

Under H.R. 323, instead of filing a form every time one of their long-standing seasoned customers comes in with a transaction over \$10,000, they will file a one-time exemption for that customer to be recognized as a seasoned and qualified customer. I think that makes more sense for the American people. I think it makes more sense to use common sense.

Someone told me recently that the District of Columbia geographically is a 10-square-mile area, some have said it is a 10-square-mile logic-free environment. Well, we have an opportunity to overcome that feeling today by bringing some logic to the way we handle these cash transactions.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 323. Let's bring some common sense and logic back into the way government handles national security and recognize that banks and their seasoned customers, those relationships are long-standing and that time would be better served in looking at other opportunities.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BACHUS. Madam Speaker, I yield to myself such time as I may consume.

I want to take this occasion to first thank Mr. FRANK and congratulate him. I think this is the first piece of legislation that he is bringing to the floor in his capacity as the new chairman of the Financial Services Committee. I congratulate you on your appointment to that important position, Mr. FRANK.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. I thank the gentleman, and if the gentleman would yield.

Mr. BACHUS. Yes, I would yield.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. I would certainly recommend the way this bill is being treated and received

on both sides as a precedent that I hope will be followed.

Mr. BACHUS. That sounds very good to me.

I do want to thank you for this piece of legislation because I think it is both a predictor of the past in that this committee has worked in a bipartisan way to do the right thing for both the customers of financial services and for the financial services institutions. And I am very optimistic that we will continue to work together.

I am going to yield back the balance of my time. I have about a five-page statement that I will spare the body having to listen to.

I do want to say this: last year this legislation came up, a similar legislation to this, both in March and July of last year; so this is basically our third shot in less than a year. It amends the Bank Secrecy Act; it amends specifically the part of that act dealing with currency transaction reports. It does not amend the part dealing with suspicious activity reports. They will continue to report to the different law enforcement agencies. What this will affect is your drug stores, your grocery stores, your retail outlets, who every day are filing these reports.

It is estimated by the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network that the cost of these alone is 25 minutes spent filing each one of these reports. So this is going to be a tremendous burden taken away from them. The American Banking Association said that it will result in a savings of \$187 million annually.

I rise in strong support of H.R. 323, The Seasoned Customer CTR Exemption Act of 2007.

H.R. 323, which I introduced with Chairman FRANK, simplifies the process by which financial institutions may be exempted from filing currency transaction reports, CTRs, for seasoned customers while still ensuring valuable information is passed on to law enforcement.

Twice last year, legislation similar to H.R. 323 passed the House overwhelmingly: H.R. 5341, the Seasoned Customer CTR Exemption Act of 2006 passed the House by voice vote last July. In addition, the language was included in the House-passed version of regulatory relief legislation—H.R. 3505—which passed the House last March by a vote of 415–2.

H.R. 323 seeks to reduce regulatory burden caused by the Bank Secrecy Act. Specifically, the legislation requires regulators to promulgate new regulations and streamline the process by which financial institutions may be exempted from filing CTRs for seasoned customers. CTRs are required to be filed for cash transactions of \$10,000 and above. This filing is required even in the case of seasoned customers—long-time bank customers that routinely deal in large volumes of cash, but whose business dealings are well-enough understood to rule out the possibility of money laundering or the financing of terror.

The Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, FinCEN, which administers the Bank Secrecy Act, received over 12 million CTRs in 2005. According to a survey conducted by the Treasury Department, more than 30 percent of

these CTRs were on recurring customer transactions that were eligible for exemption for filing under existing rules.

Unfortunately, the current process by which a financial institution can exempt seasoned customers is rarely invoked because it is difficult to understand, needlessly cumbersome, and subject to redundant renewals.

The filing of these superfluous forms imposes an unnecessary cost on both the financial services industry and the law enforcement community.

With respect to the financial services industry, according to data released last year the number of CTRs filed on an annual basis now tops 13.1 million. Even FinCEN's conservative estimate of around 25 minutes per report for filing and recordkeeping indicates the banking industry as a whole devoted about 5.5 million staff hours to handling CTRs in 2005.

Based on a survey by the American Bankers Association, the industry paid around \$187 million in wages for this staff time.

A typical bank with \$2 billion of assets filed 1,400 CTRs in 2005. These filings took 583 staff-hours, with 438 of the staffhours simply to report on long-standing customers.

With respect to the law enforcement community, not only do these superfluous reports add nothing to its efforts, they actually make it more difficult for the law enforcement community to track suspicious activity by requiring it to wade through millions of pages of unnecessary paperwork.

The Government Accountability Office, GAO, the Internal Revenue Service, IRS, and FinCEN have all recommended that the number of CTRs be reduced by 30 to 40 percent by simply exempting large well-established customers or so-called seasoned customers.

In 1994, the GAO published a report which concluded, based upon an extensive analysis of CTRs, that the volume of reports could be substantially reduced without jeopardizing law enforcement priorities. According to that report, in 1993 the IRS, which administers the CTR program, stated that 30 to 40 percent of these reports of routine deposits by large, well-established retail businesses have no likelihood of identifying potential money laundering or other currency violations.

William Fox, who headed up FinCEN from 2003 to 2006, testified as follows before our Committee:

We know that some of the currency transaction reports filed by financial institutions are of little relevance in the investigation of financial crimes. We also know that depository institutions, especially our community banks, identify the time and expense of filing CTRs as the number one regulatory expense. It is clear that our efforts to encourage the exemption of routine filings on certain customers has not brought about the reductions of filings that were sought.

H.R. 323 will reduce the number of CTRs by clarifying the exemption process, thereby freeing financial institutions from having to file CTRs for routine cash transactions with their long-time customers, i.e. supermarkets, fast food restaurants or warehouse stores. This will enable law enforcement to target its resources on CTRs where criminal or terrorist activity is suspected. Moreover, under the legislation, banks will still be required to report suspicious transactions engaged in by exempted businesses pursuant to the Suspicious Activity Reporting regime administered by FinCEN.

Let me close by thanking Chairman FRANK, Congressman HENSARLING, Congressman

MOORE, Congressman RENZI, Congresswoman HOOLEY, and Congresswoman MALONEY for all of their work on this legislation. Since this is the first bill that the gentleman from Massachusetts has brought to the floor in his capacity as Chairman of the Financial Services Committee, I want to congratulate him on his appointment, and tell him that I look forward to working with him to build on the record of bipartisan legislative accomplishments that our Committee has compiled over the past several Congresses.

Finally, let me also thank Former FinCEN Director Fox, who deserves a lot of credit for his work on this issue. I look forward to working with the Senate and the new FinCEN Director to ensure that this important legislation is signed into law.

Ms. HIRONO. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 323, the Seasoned Customer CTR Exemption Act. This bill eliminates a no-longer-necessary regulatory requirement which increases the costs of doing business for hundreds of financial institutions and their customers who ultimately bear the cost of this regulation.

H.R. 323 provides long overdue relief for our financial institutions from the requirement of keeping records and filing reports called Currency Transaction Reports (CTRs) to the Treasury Department for any financial transaction valued in excess of \$10,000.00.

While the original purpose of the regulation, to identify suspected money laundering activities, was a commendable tool for Federal prosecutors, its utility has been adequately replaced since 1996 by the filing of Suspicious Activity Reports required by Treasury Department's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network. The CTRs are no longer the primary tool to identify suspected money laundering activities but banks must still file these reports, unless an exemption is given by the Department to certain "qualified business customers." The exemption procedures, however, have been found to be difficult to understand, cumbersome and still required the banks to obtain annual renewals.

This legislation will allow by statute the Treasury Department to issue regulations that would permit depository institutions to apply for an exemption from the requirement to file CTRs on a "qualified customer." The bill defines a qualified customer as any business organized or incorporated under state or federal law that has maintained a deposit account with the institution for at least twelve months and engaged in multiple currency transactions otherwise subject to the reporting requirement.

An estimated 30 percent of the 12 million CTRs received by the Treasury Department were filed on recurring customer transactions that were eligible for exemption under the current law. This bill will relieve financial institutions of the costly and unnecessary requirement to file CTRs in those instances and allow them to file a one-time notice of exemption for each qualified customer.

The Department will still be permitted where justified to suspend, reject or revoke such exemption notices to assure that it performs its legal duties. It also requires the department to report back within 3 years of enactment on the effects of the bill.

This bill is an example of Congress taking appropriate action after reviewing a regulatory requirement that made sense when first enacted but which no longer is needed. Too

often, these burdensome requirements continue on the books to the detriment of our business community. Congress should continue to work with our business community to identify other instances of unnecessary regulations and requirements so that appropriate action can be taken.

Mr. BACHUS. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 323.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 65

Mr. TANNER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my name be removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 65.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AND UNITED STATES TERRITORIES CIRCULATING QUARTER DOLLAR PROGRAM ACT

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 392) to provide for a circulating quarter dollar program to honor the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the United States Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 392

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "District of Columbia and United States Territories Circulating Quarter Dollar Program Act".

SEC. 2. ISSUANCE OF REDESIGNED QUARTER DOLLARS HONORING THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AND EACH OF THE TERRITORIES.

Section 5112 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(r) REDESIGN AND ISSUANCE OF CIRCULATING QUARTER DOLLAR HONORING THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AND EACH OF THE TERRITORIES.—

"(1) REDESIGN IN 2009.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding the fourth sentence of subsection (d)(1) and subsection (d)(2) and subject to paragraph (6)(B), quarter dollar coins issued during 2009, shall have designs on the reverse side selected in accordance with this subsection which are emblematic of the District of Columbia and the territories.

"(B) FLEXIBILITY WITH REGARD TO PLACEMENT OF INSCRIPTIONS.—Notwithstanding

subsection (d)(1), the Secretary may select a design for quarter dollars issued during 2009 in which—

“(i) the inscription described in the second sentence of subsection (d)(1) appears on the reverse side of any such quarter dollars; and

“(ii) any inscription described in the third sentence of subsection (d)(1) or the designation of the value of the coin appears on the obverse side of any such quarter dollars.

“(2) SINGLE DISTRICT OR TERRITORY DESIGN.—The design on the reverse side of each quarter dollar issued during 2009 shall be emblematic of one of the following: The District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the United States Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

“(3) SELECTION OF DESIGN.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Each of the 6 designs required under this subsection for quarter dollars shall be—

“(i) selected by the Secretary after consultation with—

“(I) the chief executive of the District of Columbia or the territory being honored, or such other officials or group as the chief executive officer of the District of Columbia or the territory may designate for such purpose; and

“(II) the Commission of Fine Arts; and

“(ii) reviewed by the Citizens Coinage Advisory Committee.

“(B) SELECTION AND APPROVAL PROCESS.—Designs for quarter dollars may be submitted in accordance with the design selection and approval process developed by the Secretary in the sole discretion of the Secretary.

“(C) PARTICIPATION.—The Secretary may include participation by District or territorial officials, artists from the District of Columbia or the territory, engravers of the United States Mint, and members of the general public.

“(D) STANDARDS.—Because it is important that the Nation's coinage and currency bear dignified designs of which the citizens of the United States can be proud, the Secretary shall not select any frivolous or inappropriate design for any quarter dollar minted under this subsection.

“(E) PROHIBITION ON CERTAIN REPRESENTATIONS.—No head and shoulders portrait or bust of any person, living or dead, and no portrait of a living person may be included in the design of any quarter dollar under this subsection.

“(4) TREATMENT AS NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of sections 5134 and 5136, all coins minted under this subsection shall be considered to be numismatic items.

“(5) ISSUANCE.—

“(A) QUALITY OF COINS.—The Secretary may mint and issue such number of quarter dollars of each design selected under paragraph (4) in uncirculated and proof qualities as the Secretary determines to be appropriate.

“(B) SILVER COINS.—Notwithstanding subsection (b), the Secretary may mint and issue such number of quarter dollars of each design selected under paragraph (4) as the Secretary determines to be appropriate, with a content of 90 percent silver and 10 percent copper.

“(C) TIMING AND ORDER OF ISSUANCE.—Coins minted under this subsection honoring the District of Columbia and each of the territories shall be issued in equal sequential intervals during 2009 in the following order: the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the United States Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

“(6) OTHER PROVISIONS.—

“(A) APPLICATION IN EVENT OF ADMISSION AS A STATE.—If the District of Columbia or any territory becomes a State before the end of

the 10-year period referred to in subsection (1)(1), subsection (1)(7) shall apply, and this subsection shall not apply, with respect to such State.

“(B) APPLICATION IN EVENT OF INDEPENDENCE.—If any territory becomes independent or otherwise ceases to be a territory or possession of the United States before quarter dollars bearing designs which are emblematic of such territory are minted pursuant to this subsection, this subsection shall cease to apply with respect to such territory.

“(7) TERRITORY DEFINED.—For purposes of this subsection, the term ‘territory’ means the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the United States Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIERREZ) and the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this legislation, and to insert extraneous material thereon.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 3 minutes.

Madam Speaker, I urge the House pass H.R. 392, a bipartisan bill introduced by the distinguished gentlelady from Washington, D.C., Ms. HOLMES NORTON.

This legislation simply extends the very popular quarter coin bill to honor the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

□ 1300

We believe that extending the program will generate the same cultural pride in the District of Columbia and the U.S. territories that is done in every State across the Nation. When it comes to American history and tradition, Washington, D.C., is second to none, and that is why I am pleased that the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia has introduced this bill.

Citizens of other territories have made similar contributions and sacrifices. They, too, deserve the highest possible recognition and equality. That is why, in my opinion, extending the quarter program to include the U.S. territories is the least we can do to recognize the role that these great peoples and their cultures played in enriching American history.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CASTLE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I also rise in support of H.R. 392, the District of Columbia and United States Territories Circulating Quarter Dollar

Program Act. I want to thank Chairman FRANK, Chairman GUTIERREZ, and Ranking Member BACHUS for the Financial Services Committee's support of this legislation and for getting this important bill to the floor early in the 110th Congress. This is a little bit unusual that we are doing early, perhaps early enough to get it done in the Senate as well.

The legislation before us would extend the popular 50 State Quarter project to include coins honoring the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the United States Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Madam Speaker, the 50 State Quarter legislation has proven to be a great success. It has reinvigorated coin collecting, has become an invaluable educational tool, and has so far contributed close to \$6 billion to the United States Treasury through seigniorage and the sale of products to collectors. With an estimated 140 million Americans collecting these coins, the State quarters have become the most popular coin program in the United States' Mint history.

Madam Speaker, expanding the program to include D.C. and the U.S. territories will further benefit the taxpayer and educate Americans about our Commonwealth. These coins are integral to the history of our country and educate children and tourists about the American way of life. This bipartisan legislation is supported by the members of the Financial Services Committee and has passed the House in every Congress since the 106th Congress. I am pleased that we have brought this much-needed legislation to the floor today and urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in supporting the bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Madam Speaker, I yield 3½ minutes to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON), who is an effective and tireless advocate for the people of Washington, D.C., and the author of this bill.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois for yielding and for his early work on this bill, and I certainly thank the gentleman from Delaware, who has worked on this matter with me, which now this makes the fifth time. Indeed, this is the fifth time, and I am grateful that the House has been willing to come back time and again, that we will pass a bill to afford the five insular areas and the District of Columbia a quarter bearing a design of their choice on the reverse side. Inadvertently these Americans were excluded from the 50 State bill affording this same right to the States in 1998.

We owe very special thanks to successive committee and subcommittee Chairs and ranking members of the Financial Services Committee. We especially appreciate the new chairman,

BARNEY FRANK, who reached out to us to put this bill for consideration by the House on the early suspension calendar.

Forty States have had their State designs on the reverse side of the quarter with four more States to be added before this year is ended. All the coins are minted according to the year each State ratified the Constitution of the United States or were admitted into the Union.

Although States have appropriate latitude, there are limitations as to what can be used as a design. According to the law, the Secretary of Treasury has the final approval of each design. The law gives clear guidance as to what is an acceptable design concept. Suitable design concepts include State landmarks, historically significant buildings, symbols of State resources or industries, official State flora and fauna, State icons, and outlines of States. Among the examples of suitable coins are many, New York's Statue of Liberty and the like.

This bill points out the importance of including all Americans in the symbols of American citizenship. The residents of the District and of the insular areas are full and equal American citizens. To leave them out of mere exercises of citizenship is to seem to deny the citizenship they revere and share with other Americans. The Americans who live in these areas have fought and died in our country's wars and have extraordinary records of service, particularly in the Armed Forces, in considerably larger numbers than many States. District citizens, in addition, pay Federal income taxes.

We in the Congress all represent proud Americans. There are, of course, significant differences between the States and the jurisdictions covered by this bill. However, qualification to be part of a program of quarter coins to commemorate congressional districts is not one of them. Under the Constitution all Americans are equal notwithstanding important differences in form, structure, and other significant distinctions. Today, by including all Americans, Congress avoids any appearance of differential or discriminatory treatment and any implication that these areas are colonies, never the intention when the five jurisdictions were not included in the original bill in 1998, as the House has made clear by repeatedly bringing this bill to the floor. Perhaps the other body this time is ready to grant us our citizenship.

Today, when our country is at war and faces unparalleled dangers, this bill is yet another example of our unity as Americans and our indivisibility in honoring all of our country's citizens. By repeatedly passing this measure, the House has made it abundantly clear that we are one country, and that our hope is that the Senate will join us.

Mr. CASTLE. Madam Speaker, at this time I yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished gen-

tleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. FORTUÑO).

Mr. FORTUÑO. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 392, the District of Columbia and United States Territories Circulating Quarter Dollar Program Act, of which I am an original cosponsor. I want to thank Chairmen FRANK and GUTIERREZ and Ranking Members CASTLE and BACHUS for their leadership on this.

This bill, introduced by Congresswoman ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON, whom I commend as well, would finally allow the District of Columbia as well as Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, the Virgin Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands the right to choose a design, which would be imprinted on the reverse of a quarter. Inadvertently these jurisdictions were excluded from the 50 State quarter dollar bill that gave each State their own coins in 1998.

I echo the sentiments of my colleagues. This bill recognizes the importance of including all Americans in the symbols of American citizenship. I am confident and hopeful that this bill will see swift congressional passage and then that the President will imprint his signature.

As Puerto Rico's sole representative in Congress of the almost 4 million American citizens who reside in Puerto Rico, it is my honor to acknowledge the significant contributions which Puerto Rican Americans have made to our Nation. In particular, Puerto Ricans have never failed in their proud patriotic commitment to their call of duty, defending this Nation and its democratic principles. Madam Speaker, Puerto Rican Americans have served with honor and distinction in the Armed Forces of the United States in all wars and conflicts since 1917 to this day.

This bill's passage is long overdue. Its enactment would be an extremely meaningful way to honor these Puerto Rican Americans. It may seem like a small gesture, but our exclusion from this program undermines how faithful Puerto Rican Americans have been to this Nation and how we revere our citizenship and fellowship with all Americans.

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Madam Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the delegate from Washington, D.C. (Ms. NORTON) and ask unanimous consent that she be permitted to control that time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. JONES of Ohio). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from the U.S. Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN).

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, once again the bill to add the quarters representing the

District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands is before this body for passage.

And I want to thank Chairman FRANK, Ranking Member CASTLE, and my colleagues who have supported this in the past and our colleague ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON for her persistence, which I believe is going to pay off in this Congress. The holdup in the past has been in the other body, but I believe we have a commitment to get it passed this time.

As often happens in the territories, not usually Washington, D.C., we were overlooked and left out when the bill authorizing the coins first passed and was signed into law. With the passage today of H.R. 392, we will fix that oversight, but I hope we can move to ensure that the territories are remembered and considered when any legislation is being written.

We will continue to work to that end, but today my constituents are looking forward to displaying an image on our coin that will convey a part of our rich history to our fellow Americans and people around the world, whether it would be General Budhoe, the slave who led the effort that resulted in our emancipation; the three women who are best known for having led the labor revolt of 1878; D. Hamilton Jackson, a judge, labor leader, champion of the free press, and actually the first delegate to Washington on behalf of the Virgin Islands; or any number of people or monuments that represent who and what we are when that is yet to be decided.

But, Madam Speaker, with the passage of this bill today, we will have begun the process, and the Virgin Islands will be ready to proudly join the States in this program.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 392.

Mr. CASTLE. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from American Samoa.

(Mr. FALOMAVAEGA asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FALOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 392, the District of Columbia and United States Territories Circulating Quarter Dollar Program Act.

I want to commend my colleague from the District of Columbia for introducing this proposed legislation to include the District of Columbia and the territories by amending the 50 States Commemorative Coin Program Act that was made law since 1997. I want to commend the gentleman from Massachusetts, the chairman of the House Financial Services Committee; as well as the ranking member, the gentleman from Alabama, for their leadership and support of this legislation. Madam Speaker, I also want to

especially thank the gentleman from Delaware, my esteemed friend, for his unwavering support of this legislation. For many years he has worked tirelessly with the sponsor of this bill, and I would be remiss if I did not thank the good gentleman from Delaware for his commitment to pass this historic legislation.

This important piece of legislation has been an ongoing issue for the past 8 years, Madam Speaker. All five congressional delegates are and were original cosponsors of this bipartisan measure. During the 107th Congress we introduced H.R. 4005, identical legislation that was unanimously passed by the House and was received in the Senate in 2002. In the 108th and 109th Congresses, the same legislation was unanimously passed with bipartisan support by the House. But, unfortunately, Congress adjourned before the Senate could consider the bills.

Madam Speaker, I am hopeful that we pass H.R. 392 and that the Senate will pass this legislation before the 110th Congress adjourns. H.R. 392 affords us an opportunity to recognize the special contributions of the residents of the good people of the District of Columbia and the territories.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO).

□ 1315

Ms. BORDALLO. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 392, the District of Columbia and the United States Territories Circulating Quarter Dollar Program Act.

This bill would authorize the Secretary of the Treasury to provide for a circulating quarter dollar coin program to honor the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the United States Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Commemorative Coin Program Act was passed, Madam Speaker, in 1997, and enacted as Public Law 105-124. It authorized the minting of 50 commemorative coin designs to represent the unique culture and history of each respective State. This is an unprecedented program by which the design of the United States quarter dollar changes five times each year for a 10-year period beginning in January 1999. The 50 States are honored under the current program in the order in which they were admitted into the Union. This program authorized the first change to the quarter since production of the bicentennial quarter in 1975-1976 and is meant to foster pride among citizens of each State, greater appreciation for the diversity of our Nation, and to instill an enhanced sense of national unity. By all accounts, Madam Speaker, this program has been a resounding success. However, it has excluded the territories.

H.R. 392 represents the fifth consecutive attempt, the fifth consecutive attempt to enact legislation to honor the Capital City, Washington, D.C., and the U.S. territories by including them in the 50 State Quarter Program.

I want to thank the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON), who has persevered over all these years to try to get this piece of legislation through, and I also thank the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) for his continued strong support for the District of Columbia and the U.S. territories to be included in this successful program.

I represent Guam, an island approximately 3,500 miles southwest of Hawaii. Guam, like the District of Columbia and the other U.S. territories, has unique attributes that too few Americans are aware of. In fact, it is all too common for Americans to be unaware of or misinformed about Guam's relationship with the United States and that its residents are duly U.S. citizens. I believe this record should be improved, and one way to accomplish this is to authorize the Secretary of the Treasury to provide for the circulating quarter dollar coin program to honor the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the United States Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas.

The bottom line is that every time someone looks at the back of a quarter, they learn something about the State represented. Much can be learned about Guam and her sister territories and the District. In doing so, the curious American will learn more about their wonderful country in which they live and more about their fellow Americans with whom they share this bountiful land.

Mr. CASTLE. Madam Speaker, just in closing I thought I would reference back to what I said in the opening, and that is that this particular program which is known as the 50 State Quarter Program, has made a profit, if you want to call it that, through what we call seigniorage of about \$6 billion for the Federal Government. How can that be? It is fairly simple: it costs about a nickel to make a quarter, and we essentially sell the quarters, if you will, for 25 cents; and that amount of money, that extra money is carried over, that 20 cents. And since none of these coins are being basically turned in because of all the collecting which is going on, this is money which the Federal Government can spend, it is called seigniorage, and it has worked out extraordinarily well.

This program not only honors and recognizes these very important entities that have been spoken to by their representatives here today, but also provides an opportunity for the Federal Government to continue to profit from this program, which will, by the end, end otherwise in the year 2008. So I would encourage everybody to vote for it.

I hope, to the distinguished woman from the District of Columbia, that the fifth time is good luck. We have had great luck here in the House; it is in the Senate that we seem to struggle a little bit, and hopefully we can get it done this time.

And let me make a point that I think is important. There has been a lot in the news lately about a delegate voting bill which some people here on the floor may be interested in. This is not that bill, and I am not either denigrating or advocating that bill today. But I think it is very important to understand what this is: it is just a clear recognition of those areas that have been left out of this quarter program that many of us think should be brought in and, for that reason, are very supportive of this legislation. Hopefully this is a bill which both political parties can be very supportive of when the time comes to vote on it.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, may I inquire how much time is remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman has 9½ minutes remaining.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I cannot close without saying a word about the spirit in which the gentleman from Delaware has handled this matter. What is it, we are told 8 years. It was a quintessential moment of bipartisanship.

I was sitting in my office when the bill came to the floor, and staff came in and said the District of Columbia and the territories are not included in this coin bill. I ran to the floor and ran over to the gentleman. It is understandable, it is called 50 States, that it is easy to forget us I guess, and he assured us there had been no intention.

Madam Speaker, I had two choices. One choice was on suspension, as it is today, which was simply to ask my side to vote against it and it wouldn't have passed on suspension. The other side was to listen to what the chairman said, and what he said was that he would put this bill again on the floor. He, and for that matter his successor committee chairs and subcommittee chairs, has never wavered on putting this bill forward. Let us be clear that when we are talking about five times, we are talking about, shall we call them, the other body.

I point this out because I believe we owe the same reciprocal spirit of bipartisanship that, sir, you so kindly granted us. The fact is, this is such a small matter. That such a small matter can be so hurtful may not be understandable to others.

One way to understand it is the disproportionate service in the Armed Forces. I don't know why, but you have only to look at the statistics to be stunned by the disproportionate service in our Armed Forces of people from the District of Columbia and the insular areas. It is not because they during the period of the draft were more often drafted; it was a greater willingness to serve.

I want to say, Madam Speaker, in closing that a virtual unwritten rule of this House should be that no distinction not proscribed by laws ever be made among American citizens, particularly in the people's House. We will all be challenged, I hope shortly, on an entirely unrelated bill, not the bill that the gentleman from Delaware spoke of that is due to come to the floor on delegate voting, but yet another bill, a bill 200 years in the making, 200 painful years of service in the Armed Forces, of paying taxes without representation which are going to call Congress to account, especially my party, which has flooded this floor with statements of belief in the full voting rights of the people of the Nation's Capital.

To his great credit, Representative TOM DAVIS when he chaired the Government Reform Committee discovered a magic opportunity, that is the only word for it because it won't come again soon, that the State of Utah had barely missed getting a vote in the last census. And he came to me and suggested that we put Utah and the District of Columbia together just as Alaska and Hawaii came in the Union together, and precisely the only way we have increased representation in the House and the Senate, and that is through political balance.

It was an offer we couldn't refuse, but it took us 4 years of my negotiating with the Democrats who kept telling me what they wanted and Mr. DAVIS negotiating with Republicans who kept telling them what they wanted, and finally we got the bill through the Government Reform Committee 15-14. This is such an extraordinary bipartisan vote on a controversial bill, 15 Democrats, 14 Republicans voting for the bill, the Davis-Norton bill for a House vote. Not a vote in both Houses, my friends, a vote in the people's House, went to the Judiciary Committee, additional requirements made, they were fulfilled by the State of Utah.

Here, we have the most Republican State in the Union and a big city normally Democratic who come forward together, who are literally joined at the hip together, and say regrettably, although we thank the other side who took this almost to the floor, through two committees, didn't get it to the floor, my party has an obligation written in miles of rhetoric, written in their platform over many decades to bring the bill for the full vote for the residents of the District of Columbia to this floor.

I congratulate my colleagues on the other side who almost brought us home. Now, the challenge is to those who got up and pointed their finger at the other side about not doing enough, the finger is now pointed at us and the time has come. While this bill has nothing to do with that, if you represent the District of Columbia, if you were second per capita in Federal income taxes, if you had gone to Arling-

ton during this war, if you had sat in churches during this war, then you would understand that any opportunity to remind this Congress, including my side, that the moment of truth has come and it has got to come in the 110th Congress for a seat for the District of Columbia this year. Meanwhile, we begin with an entirely non-controversial "yes" symbolic bill. Let this bill pass the House.

I thank the Speaker, and I particularly thank my good colleagues for persevering with us. I hope we have set the tone for the 110th Congress.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIERREZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 392.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

STREAMLINING OF SAFETY ACT AND ANTI-TERRORISM TECHNOLOGY PROCUREMENT PROCESSES

Mr. LANGEVIN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 599) to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to streamline the SAFETY Act and anti-terrorism technology procurement processes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 599

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. STREAMLINING OF SAFETY ACT AND ANTI-TERRORISM TECHNOLOGY PROCUREMENT PROCESSES.

(a) PERSONNEL.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall ensure that, in addition to any personnel engaged in technical evaluations that may be appropriate, a sufficient number of full-time equivalent personnel, who are properly trained and qualified to apply legal, economic, and risk analyses, are involved in the review and prioritization of anti-terrorism technologies for the purpose of determining whether such technologies may be designated by the Secretary as qualified anti-terrorism technologies under section 862(b) of the SAFETY Act (6 U.S.C. 441(b)) or certified by the Secretary under section 863(d) of such Act (6 U.S.C. 442(d)).

(b) COORDINATION WITHIN DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall—

(1) establish a formal coordination process that includes the official of the Department of Homeland Security with primary responsibility for the implementation of the SAFETY Act, the Chief Procurement Officer of the Department, the Under Secretary for Science and Technology, the Under Secretary for Policy, and the Department of Homeland Security General Counsel to ensure the maximum application of the litigation and risk management provisions of the SAFETY Act to anti-terrorism technologies procured by the Department; and

(2) promote awareness and utilization of the litigation and risk management provisions of the SAFETY Act in the procurement of anti-terrorism technologies.

(c) ISSUANCE OF DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTIVE.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall, in accordance with the final rule implementing the SAFETY Act, issue a Departmental management directive providing for coordination between Department procurement officials and any other Department official responsible for implementing the SAFETY Act in advance of any Department procurement of an anti-terrorism technology, as required under subsection (b).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN) and the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Rhode Island.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LANGEVIN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks, and to insert extraneous materials relating to the bill under consideration into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Rhode Island?

There was no objection.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Today, Madam Speaker, I rise in support of legislation I introduced, the SAFETY Reform Act of 2007, which will help ensure that safe and effective antiterrorism technologies are being deployed by the Department of Homeland Security to bolster our security throughout the country.

□ 1330

The Support for Anti-Terrorism by Fostering Effective Technologies Act of 2002, or SAFETY Act as it is known, was designed to provide incentives for development and deployment of antiterrorism technologies.

The SAFETY Act was intended to address the liability concerns of businesses and to pave the way for innovative development of key antiterrorism technologies. Unfortunately, a lack of personnel within the Office of SAFETY Act Implementation, an excessively burdensome application process, and a lack of communication between the Department's procurement and management divisions made for difficult implementation of the SAFETY Act.

This legislation which I have introduced, along with Chairman THOMPSON, Subcommittee Ranking Member Rogers and many other members of the Homeland Security Committee, should fix many of those shortcomings.

Last year the Homeland Security Committee held a subcommittee hearing highlighting some of the problems that arose from the SAFETY Act's implementation. We heard from a variety of industry leaders and experts that the application process was overly burdensome, and that it took far too long for the Department of Homeland Security to properly evaluate and approve many of the applications that businesses submitted.

While I am pleased to see that many companies with new and innovative technologies have already applied for the SAFETY Act program, the program can be effective only when the applications are properly approved.

My legislation, therefore, takes three important steps to improve the effectiveness of the application process. First, this bill will help facilitate communication between the Department of Homeland Security's procurement sector and the Department's Office of SAFETY Act Implementation, which is the entity tasked with reviewing the applications. This approach will allow officials at DHS to thoroughly review applications while also maintaining quick turnaround times.

Second, the bill would require that the Secretary employ a sufficient number of analysts in the Office of SAFETY Act Implementation who can deal with the ever-growing number of applications. Appropriate staffing will help ensure that the applications are being processed in a timely manner, thereby allowing us to deploy the newest and best technologies as quickly as possible.

Finally, this legislation will help raise awareness of SAFETY Act risk management provisions among procurement officers across Federal, State, and local levels, and throughout the private sector.

Contributions made by private enterprises are an extremely important component of our Nation's security, and our governmental policies should continue to encourage innovation, not stifle it.

By passing the SAFETY Reform Act, I am optimistic that we will be able to effectively streamline the application process and encourage participation in this program across all levels of government and the private sector.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the SAFETY Reform Act of 2007.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MCCAUL), my friend and colleague.

Mr. MCCAUL of Texas. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I want to thank Chairman LANGEVIN and Ranking Member ROGERS for their leadership on this issue, and I am proud to have been a coauthor of this bill.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 599, a bipartisan bill to help protect and encourage companies that develop antiterrorism technologies. This bill helps implement the Support Anti-Terrorism by Fostering Effective Technologies, or SAFETY Act. The SAFETY Act was passed as part of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, and basically it encourages companies to develop antiterrorism technology by limiting their liability in the event of a terrorist attack.

As part of the oversight provided in the 109th Congress, the Homeland Security Committee determined that the SAFETY Act better protected the American people, and over 60 new technologies have been approved for coverage under the SAFETY Act in areas such as radiation detection, facility protection and passenger screening.

Unfortunately, in order to qualify for SAFETY Act protection, companies must go through a cumbersome application process rife with red tape. This bill cuts that red tape by requiring DHS to streamline their process and make it more effective.

In my district there are a number of companies developing antiterrorism technologies, including detection and identification systems. By limiting their potential legal liability, this bill will help them develop new technologies to address the real and constant threat of a terrorist attack.

This bill represents a commonsense, bipartisan approach, and I applaud my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, an approach to streamline government and make it friendlier to the American people. By doing this, we will make it easier for government and the private sector to work together to make America safer.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON), the chairman of the Homeland Security Committee.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. LANGEVIN.

Today I rise to support a bill that reaffirms our commitment to ensuring that safe and effective antiterrorism technologies are being deployed by the Department of Homeland Security.

This bill, offered by my colleague Mr. LANGEVIN, will provide much-needed reforms to the SAFETY Act process within the Department.

In conducting oversight over the Department's implementation of the SAFETY Act over the last several years, it was apparent that there was several significant disconnections within the Department.

It became clear that the Office of SAFETY Act Implementation and the private sector were working on separate wavelengths. The right hand simply was not speaking to the left.

The private sector struggled to fulfill the lengthy paperwork requirements of the SAFETY Act, while the SAFETY Act office often seemed nonresponsive to private sector requests.

While the Department's adoption of final regulations this summer implementing the SAFETY Act appears to be an encouraging step forward, still more must be done to ensure that the government is being responsive to developments in the private sector.

This bill would require that the Secretary employ a sufficient number of

analysts in the Office of SAFETY Act Implementation who can deal with the ever-growing number of applications. This will ensure that applications are being processed in a timely fashion to bring more technologies to the table earlier than ever.

Perhaps more importantly, this bill will also ensure the proper coordination between the Department's procurement and implementing offices and raise the awareness of SAFETY Act risk management provisions among procurement officers across Federal, State and local government, and throughout the private sector.

In order to generate revolutionary breakthroughs in antiterrorism technologies, the Department must actively promote awareness of SAFETY Act protections not only among private sector, but across government procurement agencies. This legislation will help achieve those goals.

I congratulate Mr. LANGEVIN for offering this legislation and strongly urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill. We must enable the private sector to deliver the revolutionary, breakthrough technologies that will help win the Nation's fight against terrorism.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK).

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, let me just say that this piece of legislation is an outstanding bipartisan piece of work. I know that it has bipartisan support, something that is going to help the private sector and be able to help us move forward in securing America.

I would like to thank my good friend Mr. ROGERS for his outstanding work and also on the Republican side. We have had a great discussion. As you know, in the last Congress I was the ranking member on the oversight committee, and all of us that are involved in this bill have heard hours and hours of testimony on why this is important. Even going as far back as the 108th Congress in the select committee, we were hearing from members of the private sector, saying that we want to participate in protecting America, need it be bio or what have you, but we also do not want to end up losing our shirts in the process or giving away secrets.

So I think this legislation is going to help us move forward. I hope it has a speedy process in the Senate. I look forward to coming to the floor later on to vote on this very good piece of legislation.

I just wanted to come by and say, once again, this is another example on how we have and we are now working in a bipartisan way on behalf of securing America for future generations and this generation so that we can continue to move forward hand in hand.

I want to thank the bill's sponsor from Rhode Island for bringing this

legislation to the floor quickly, and also Mr. THOMPSON, the chairman of the committee, and ranking member of the committee on the Republican side for bringing this to the floor for speedy consideration.

I rise today in strong support of this legislation. H.R. 599, the Support for Antiterrorism by Fostering Effective Technologies or "SAFETY" Act would provide greater incentive to US companies that develop and produce domestic, antiterrorism technologies and would better ensure the integrity of our national security.

Congress enacted the SAFETY Act in 2002 to limit the liability of manufacturers of qualified, antiterrorism technologies. This was seen as an essential step to promote innovation in technology, and to ensure that our first responders received the very latest and best equipment.

However, the methods used by the Department of Homeland Security to implement the original legislation were markedly slow and burdensome to applicants. This created disincentive to companies to participate in the program, and negated the original intent of the legislation.

I raised this issue and others during a September 2006 joint hearing before the Homeland Security Subcommittees on Management, Integration, and Oversight and Emergency Preparedness, Science and Technology. In that hearing, questions were raised addressing these issues; however, little was done in the closing days of the 109th to enact sufficient change. The Department did take positive steps to alleviate some of these issues, by issuing improved application "kits" and approving the final rule.

Still more is needed, and H.R. 599 would be a significant step in that direction. Because procuring these vital technologies as they become available is imperative to national security, SAFETY Act certification must happen at the same time as production.

To ensure that both our companies and our first responders are protected, this bill would require the Department to formalize the coordination between its procurement office and the Office of SAFETY Act Implementation. This would stand to greatly improve the efficiency of the program and the application process. Moreover, this bill would also ensure that sufficient staff be made available for reviewing applications. Delays in certification can dissuade companies from bringing life saving technology to market for long periods of time.

The SAFETY Act, as it is named, is about the security of the American people. Improving this process will ensure that our Federal, State, and local authorities have the tools they need to protect the American people.

I urge my colleagues, to support this bipartisan measure and to further strengthen our defense from terror.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The bill we consider today will streamline the procurement process of the Department of Homeland Security by implementing the SAFETY Act. The SAFETY Act was enacted in November 2002 as a part of the Homeland Security Act. At that time it was the intent of Congress to spur the development and deployment of innovative

antiterrorism technologies. The act does this, in part, by limiting the liability exposure of companies that provide those technologies in the event of a terrorist attack.

Since the law was enacted, however, the number of applications to DHS for SAFETY Act protections has fallen well below expectations. Critics charged that this result is due to a number of factors, including the Department's slow evaluation and approval process, the understaffing in key DHS offices, and the lack of full coordination between the SAFETY Act office and the procurement office in the process at DHS.

To address those concerns, the Committee on Homeland Security included bipartisan provisions in the DHS authorization bill for fiscal years 2006 and 2007, but time ran out, and neither bill came to law.

Last summer DHS issued its final rule to implement the SAFETY Act. The Department revised the application kit to make it easier for companies to apply for SAFETY Act protection.

To review those materials and hear from the private sector, I cochaired a hearing in the Management, Integration and Oversight Subcommittee with the former Chairman REICHERT and his subcommittee on September 13, 2006. We heard from the Under Secretary for Science and Technology and the chief procurement officer at DHS.

We also heard from leading industry representatives, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Homeland Security and Defense Business Council, and the Professional Services Council. The feedback we received from industry about the revisions DHS made to the process was mostly positive. Progress has been made.

DHS reports a 100 percent increase in applications, from 14 to 28, over 1 year since the fourth quarter of 2005, but more can be done to further streamline and improve the SAFETY Act procurement process.

The bill we consider today continues our work from the 109th Congress and makes those improvements. First, the bill would ensure DHS has a sufficient number of properly trained analysts to review and prioritize antiterrorism technologies that could qualify for SAFETY Act designation.

Second, the bill would establish a formal coordination process within DHS and involve the Under Secretary for Science and Technology, the Under Secretary for Policy, the chief procurement officer and the general counsel.

And third, the bill would require that SAFETY Act issues are fully considered in advance of procurement by DHS of an antiterrorism technology.

This bill would improve implementation of the SAFETY Act so the private sector can do more to protect our Nation from terrorist attacks. I urge my colleagues to support its passage.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Madam Speaker, in closing, I want to thank the speakers who have come forward. I want to thank Members on the other side of the aisle for working with us in a bipartisan fashion to bring this bill to the floor. I want to particularly recognize the leadership of Chairman THOMPSON and his due diligence in seeing that this act was put together in such a timely fashion and brought to the floor so quickly.

□ 1345

It is the responsibility of every level of government, whether it is the local, State or Federal level, first and foremost to protect our citizens. Our Nation is at war, and homeland security must be our top priority. The quicker that we can get these new and vital technologies in place that will better protect the American people, the better off we will all be.

So it is my intent that this act will clarify some of the problems with the original SAFETY Act and with the implementation that has been witnessed by the Department of Homeland Security, and I am pleased that we have brought this act to the floor today.

Madam Speaker, I move its passage.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Madam Speaker, I request that the following letters be made part of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES COUNCIL,
Arlington, VA, January 22, 2007.

Hon. JAMES LANGEVIN,
*Chairman, Subcommittee on Emerging Threats,
Cybersecurity, Science and Technology.*

Hon. MIKE ROGERS,
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Management, Investigations and Oversight.

HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE,
*House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.*

DEAR CHAIRMAN LANGEVIN AND CONGRESSMAN ROGERS: On behalf of the Professional Services Council (PSC), the leading national trade association representing the professional and technical services industry selling to the Federal Government, I am writing to endorse the legislation introduced by you and others (H.R. 599) to streamline the SAFETY Act and anti-terrorism technology procurement processes.

We appreciated the bipartisan leadership of Chairman Thompson and Ranking Member King during the 109th Congress to provide strong oversight of SAFETY Act implementation, including the execution of the responsibilities of the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Under Secretary for Science and Technology in administering the Act. We are confident that the Committee's support for the full implementation of the law and for extending the coverage of the Act to appropriate anti-terrorism technologies will remain strong through your Subcommittees' leadership.

PSC has been a strong and active supporter of the SAFETY Act since its development in Congress in 2002. We have commented extensively on the Act, on the implementing regulations, application kits, and operating principles. We have met repeatedly with key leaders within the Department and other offices in the Executive Branch. We testified before your Committee last year on the Act. We are pleased with the recent progress made in providing the regulatory and administrative framework for implementation, and with DHS's renewed commitment to moving

that implementation forward. However, more can and should be done.

While the Department is fully committed to robust implementation of the Act, we see your bill as an important step in helping the Department achieve that goal—whether through the allocation of additional full-time DHS employees to carry out the functions assigned under the Act or ensuring that the Department's internal procurement and policy organizations are aligned with and use the authorities provided under the Act. In addition, the Department plays an important role in providing guidance and information to other federal agencies and to other stakeholders about the Act. Each of these important items is addressed in H.R. 599.

We appreciated the opportunity to comment on the draft bill and are pleased to offer PSC's support for the legislation as introduced. We strongly support passage by the House early in the legislative cycle and look forward to further legislative and administrative action to fully implement the goals and objectives of the SAFETY Act. We also look forward to working with your Subcommittees and others on this important homeland security initiative.

In the interim, if you or your staffs have any questions or need any additional information, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely,

ALAN CHVOTKIN, ESQ.,
Senior Vice President and Counsel.

CROWELL MORING,

Washington, DC, January 22, 2007.

Re Proposed Legislation for Streamlining of SAFETY Act Processes

Representative JAMES R. LANGEVIN,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE LANGEVIN: Your proposed legislation—"Streamlining of SAFETY Act and Anti-Terrorism Technology Procurement Processes"—represents a critical step forward to enhance the implementation of the SAFETY Act. This legislation recognizes the clear Congressional purpose embodied in the SAFETY Act—save lives through anti-terrorism technology.

One of the continuing impediments to more aggressive implementation of the SAFETY Act has been the concern that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has not fully synchronized SAFETY Act approvals with major procurements for anti-terrorism technology. Your legislation squarely addresses this concern by requiring the DHS Secretary to establish a formal coordination process to assure more effective implementation of the Congressional directive to accelerate the availability of anti-terrorism technology. Thank you for promoting the SAFETY Act's core purpose and clearing the path for moving anti-terrorism technology to the Nation's front lines.

Sincerely,

DAVID Z. BODENHEIMER,
Homeland Security Practice Chair,
Crowell & Moring LLP.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
Washington, DC, January 23, 2007.

Hon. JAMES R. LANGEVIN,
Chairman, Subcommittee on Emerging Threats,
Cybersecurity, and Science and Technology,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN LANGEVIN: The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation representing more than three million businesses and organizations of every size, sector, and region, supports H.R. 599, the "SAFETY Act Reform Bill," which you

introduced with Rep. Michael D. Rogers (R-AL), Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Management, Investigations and Oversight. This bipartisan legislation provides an incentive to develop and deploy anti-terrorism technologies and services.

The Chamber applauds your leadership on this critical national security issue and looks forward to working with the Committee to ensure the SAFETY Act of 2002 is fully implemented.

Sincerely,

R. BRUCE JOSTEN.

JANUARY 23, 2007.

Re Support for H.R. 599

Hon. JAMES R. LANGEVIN,
Chairman, Subcommittee on Emerging Threats,
Cybersecurity, and Science and Technology,
House of Representatives, Committee on
Homeland Security, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. LANGEVIN: I am writing to you in my personal capacity to express my support for the goals expressed in H.R. 599. H.R. 599 is intended to encourage the Department of Homeland Security to streamline the Support Anti-Terrorism By Fostering Effective Technology Act of 2002 (SAFETY Act) application and procurement processes. The bill is drafted to ensure that the Department utilizes a sufficient number of trained personnel to review any individual application, that the various components of the Department coordinate in implementing the Act, and that Department issues a management directive to coordinate procurement and SAFETY Act implementation efforts.

In light of my experience in drafting numerous SAFETY Act applications, I support the goals enumerated by the legislation, particularly as related to Department-wide coordination and coordination in procurement policy and implementation. Through my experiences with the SAFETY Act, I believe the Department has taken a number of solid steps in ensuring that such goals are met, and any encouragement from the U.S. Congress to meet those goals is welcome. The widespread utilization of the SAFETY Act is critical to defending our nation from terrorist attacks, and so I welcome the efforts of the U.S. Congress to support the Department's efforts at full implementation.

Thank you for your consideration, and I welcome any queries on this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

BRIAN E. FINCH

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 599, to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to streamline the SAFETY Act and anti-terrorism technology procurement processes.

I would like to thank my friend from Rhode Island, Mr. LANGEVIN, for introducing H.R. 599 which is essential to the exercise of our oversight responsibility over the Department of Homeland Security and critical in ensuring our great Nation's preparation for future terrorist threats and attacks.

This bill serves largely to rearrange and streamline the Support for Anti-terrorism by Fostering Effective Technologies (SAFETY) Act of 2002. The SAFETY Act was implemented to protect the American people from terrorism by providing incentives for the development and deployment of anti-terrorism technologies for homeland security by limiting the liability of providers of qualified anti-terrorism technologies from claims arising out of acts of terrorism.

Despite our legislative intent that the SAFETY Act would pave the way for innovative development of key anti-terrorism technologies by addressing businesses' liability concerns,

unfortunately industry was skeptical about the burdens imposed by the SAFETY Act's application process as implemented by the Department of Homeland Security. Regrettably, our high expectations for the SAFETY Act were not met and issues were raised about the excessively burdensome and slow evaluation and approval of applications by the Department's Office of SAFETY Act Implementation, OSAI, during the September 2006 joint hearing before the Homeland Security Subcommittees on Management, Integration, and Oversight and Emergency Preparedness, Science and Technology.

Significant improvements have been made to make this process more user-friendly, less time-consuming, and less costly for business with the SAFETY Act Application Kit, Kit, and final rule. However positive these improvements implemented may have been, additional improvements are of paramount importance to ensure that Congress' legislative intent of the SAFETY Act is met.

H.R. 599 will better address our legislative intent of the SAFETY Act and facilitate the following improvements: Make the application process more user-friendly, less time-consuming, and less costly for businesses; make the review process more swift, efficient and effective; result in a significant increase in the volume of SAFETY Act applications; more closely integrate the application and review process with the procurement of such technologies and services; and bolster awareness of and confidence in the efficacy of the SAFETY Act program among producers of anti-terrorism technologies as well as Federal, state, and local government purchases of these technologies.

While implementing the SAFETY Act, DHS has faced substantial criticisms about delays and insufficient personnel. It is critical that the Department continue to address these persistent issues and increase the number of highly trained, full-time personnel dedicated to reviewing and approving SAFETY Act applications. It is imperative that quick turnaround times are maintained when responding to operational needs. The link between the SAFETY Act office and the procurement office must be improved. If a product meets a test for procurement officials, there is no reason why the SAFETY Act office should have to run through a new process to test the effectiveness of the product.

I commend Congressman LANGEVIN for sponsoring this legislation that requires the issuance of a Department directive to formalize the coordination between the Department's procurement office and OSAI.

Thus, I strongly urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 599, to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to streamline the SAFETY Act and anti-terrorism technology procurement processes. It is my hope and expectation that the passage of H.R. 599 will ensure the proper and timely implementation of the SAFETY Act of 2002.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. JONES of Ohio). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 599.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of

those voting have responded in the affirmative.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 599 will be followed by 5-minute votes on motions to suspend the rules with respect to House Resolution 51, H.R. 476, and House Resolution 57.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 427, nays 0, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 47]

YEAS—427

Abercrombie	Coble	Gohmert
Ackerman	Cohen	Gonzalez
Aderholt	Cole (OK)	Goode
Akin	Conaway	Goodlatte
Alexander	Conyers	Granger
Allen	Cooper	Graves
Altmire	Costa	Green, Al
Andrews	Costello	Green, Gene
Arcuri	Courtney	Grijalva
Baca	Cramer	Gutierrez
Bachmann	Crenshaw	Hall (NY)
Bachus	Crowley	Hall (TX)
Baird	Cubin	Hare
Baker	Cuellar	Harman
Baldwin	Culberson	Hastert
Barrett (SC)	Cummings	Hastings (FL)
Barrow	Davis (AL)	Hastings (WA)
Bartlett (MD)	Davis (CA)	Hayes
Barton (TX)	Davis (IL)	Heller
Bean	Davis (KY)	Hensarling
Becerra	Davis, David	Herger
Berkley	Davis, Jo Ann	Herseth
Berman	Davis, Lincoln	Higgins
Berry	Davis, Tom	Hill
Biggert	Deal (GA)	Hinchey
Billbray	DeFazio	Hinojosa
Bilirakis	DeGette	Hirono
Bishop (GA)	DeLahunt	Hobson
Bishop (NY)	DeLauro	Hodes
Bishop (UT)	Dent	Hoekstra
Blackburn	Diaz-Balart, L.	Holden
Blumenauer	Diaz-Balart, M.	Holt
Blunt	Dicks	Honda
Boehner	Dingell	Hooley
Bonner	Doggett	Hoyer
Bono	Donnelly	Hulshof
Boozman	Doolittle	Hunter
Boren	Doyle	Inglis (SC)
Boswell	Drake	Inslee
Boucher	Dreier	Israel
Boustany	Duncan	Issa
Boyd (FL)	Edwards	Jackson (IL)
Boyd (KS)	Ehlers	Jackson-Lee
Brady (PA)	Ellison	(TX)
Brady (TX)	Ellsworth	Jefferson
Braley (IA)	Emanuel	Jindal
Brown (SC)	Emerson	Johnson (GA)
Brown, Corrine	Engel	Johnson (IL)
Brown-Waite,	English (PA)	Johnson, E. B.
Ginny	Eshoo	Johnson, Sam
Buchanan	Etheridge	Jones (NC)
Burgess	Everett	Jones (OH)
Burton (IN)	Fallin	Jordan
Butterfield	Farr	Kagen
Calvert	Fattah	Kanjorski
Camp (MI)	Feeney	Kaptur
Campbell (CA)	Ferguson	Keller
Cannon	Filner	Kennedy
Cantor	Flake	Kildee
Capito	Forbes	Kilpatrick
Capps	Fortenberry	Kind
Capuano	Fossella	King (IA)
Cardoza	Fox	King (NY)
Carnahan	Frank (MA)	Kingston
Carney	Franks (AZ)	Kirk
Carter	Frelinghuysen	Klein (FL)
Castle	Gallegly	Kline (MN)
Castor	Garrett (NJ)	Knollenberg
Chabot	Gerlach	Kucinich
Chandler	Giffords	Kuhl (NY)
Clarke	Gilchrest	LaHood
Clay	Gillibrand	Lamborn
Cleaver	Gillmor	Lampson
Clyburn	Gingrey	Langevin

Lantos	Neugebauer	Shea-Porter
Larsen (WA)	Nunes	Sherman
Larson (CT)	Oberstar	Shimkus
Latham	Obey	Shuler
LaTourette	Oliver	Shuster
Lee	Ortiz	Simpson
Levin	Pallone	Sires
Lewis (CA)	Pascrell	Skelton
Lewis (GA)	Pastor	Slaughter
Lewis (KY)	Paul	Smith (NE)
Linder	Payne	Smith (NJ)
Lipinski	Pearce	Smith (TX)
LoBiondo	Pelosi	Smith (WA)
Loeb sack	Pence	Snyder
Lofgren, Zoe	Perlmuter	Solis
Lowe y	Peterson (MN)	Souder
Lungren, Daniel	Peterson (PA)	Space
E.	Petri	Spratt
Lynch	Pitts	Stark
Mack	Platts	Stearns
Mahoney (FL)	Poe	Stupak
Maloney (NY)	Pomeroy	Sullivan
Marchant	Porter	Sutton
Markey	Price (GA)	Tancredo
Marshall	Price (NC)	Tanner
Matheson	Pryce (OH)	Tauscher
Matsui	Putnam	Taylor
McCarthy (CA)	Radanovich	Terry
McCarthy (NY)	Rahall	Thompson (CA)
McCaul (TX)	Rangel	Thompson (MS)
McCollum (MN)	Ramstad	Thornberry
McCotter	Regula	Tiahrt
McCrery	Rehberg	Tiberi
McDermott	Reichert	Tierney
McGovern	Renzi	Towns
McHenry	Reyes	Turner
McHugh	Reynolds	Udall (CO)
McIntyre	Rodriguez	Udall (NM)
McKeon	Rogers (AL)	Upton
McMorris	Rogers (KY)	Van Hollen
Moders	Rogers (MI)	Velázquez
McNerney	Rohrabacher	Viscosky
McNulty	Ros-Lehtinen	Walberg
Meehan	Roskam	Walden (OR)
Meek (FL)	Ross	Walsh (NY)
Meeks (NY)	Rothman	Walz (MN)
Melancon	Roybal-Allard	Wamp
Mica	Royce	Wasserman
Michaud	Ruppersberger	Schultz
Millender-	Rush	Waters
McDonald	Ryan (OH)	Watson
Miller (FL)	Ryan (WI)	Watt
Miller (MI)	Salazar	Waxman
Miller (NC)	Sali	Weiner
Miller, Gary	Sánchez, Linda	Welch (VT)
Miller, George	T.	Weldon (FL)
Mitchell	Sanchez, Loretta	Weller
Mollohan	Sarbanes	Westmoreland
Moore (KS)	Saxton	Wexler
Moore (WI)	Schakowsky	Whitfield
Moran (KS)	Schiff	Wicker
Moran (VA)	Schmidt	Wilson (NM)
Murphy (CT)	Schwartz	Wilson (OH)
Murphy, Patrick	Scott (GA)	Wilson (SC)
Murphy, Tim	Scott (VA)	Wolf
Murtha	Sensenbrenner	Woolsey
Musgrave	Serrano	Wu
Myrick	Sessions	Yarmuth
Nadler	Sestak	Young (AK)
Napolitano	Shadegg	Young (FL)
Neal (MA)	Shays	

NOT VOTING—8

Buyer	Lucas	Pickering
Carson	Manzullo	Wynn
Gordon	Norwood	

□ 1410

Mr. HELLER of Nevada, Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida and Mr. CALVERT changed their vote from “nay” to “yea.”

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Ms. CARSON. Madam Speaker, I was unable to record my vote for rollcall vote 47. Had I been able to record my vote, I would have voted “yea.”

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question of suspending the rules and agreeing to the resolution, H. Res. 51.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 51, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 428, nays 0, not voting 7, as follows:

[Roll No. 48]

YEAS—428

Abercrombie	Clarke	Garrett (NJ)
Ackerman	Clay	Gerlach
Aderholt	Cleaver	Giffords
Akin	Clyburn	Gilchrest
Alexander	Coble	Gillibrand
Allen	Cohen	Gillmor
Altmire	Cole (OK)	Gingrey
Andrews	Conaway	Gohmert
Arcuri	Conyers	Gonzalez
Baca	Cooper	Goode
Bachmann	Costa	Goodlatte
Bachus	Costello	Gordon
Baird	Courtney	Granger
Baker	Cramer	Graves
Baldwin	Crenshaw	Green, Al
Barrett (SC)	Crowley	Green, Gene
Barrow	Cubin	Grijalva
Bartlett (MD)	Cuellar	Gutierrez
Barton (TX)	Culberson	Hall (NY)
Bean	Cummings	Hall (TX)
Becerra	Davis (AL)	Hare
Berkley	Davis (CA)	Harman
Berman	Davis (IL)	Hastert
Berry	Davis (KY)	Hastings (FL)
Biggert	Davis, David	Hastings (WA)
Billbray	Davis, Jo Ann	Hayes
Bilirakis	Davis, Lincoln	Heller
Bishop (GA)	Davis, Tom	Hensarling
Bishop (NY)	Deal (GA)	Herger
Bishop (UT)	DeFazio	Herseth
Blackburn	DeGette	Higgins
Blumenauer	DeLahunt	Hill
Blunt	DeLauro	Hinchey
Boehner	Dent	Hinojosa
Bonner	Diaz-Balart, L.	Hirono
Bono	Diaz-Balart, M.	Hobson
Boozman	Dicks	Hodes
Boren	Dingell	Hoekstra
Boswell	Doggett	Holden
Boucher	Donnelly	Holt
Boustany	Doolittle	Honda
Boyd (FL)	Doyle	Hooley
Boyd (KS)	Drake	Hoyer
Brady (PA)	Dreier	Hulshof
Brady (TX)	Duncan	Hunter
Braley (IA)	Edwards	Inglis (SC)
Brown (SC)	Ehlers	Inslee
Brown, Corrine	Ellison	Israel
Brown-Waite,	Ellsworth	Issa
Ginny	Emanuel	Jackson (IL)
Buchanan	Emerson	Jackson-Lee
Burgess	Engel	(TX)
Burton (IN)	English (PA)	Jefferson
Butterfield	Eshoo	Jindal
Calvert	Etheridge	Johnson (GA)
Camp (MI)	Everett	Johnson (IL)
Campbell (CA)	Fallin	Johnson, E. B.
Cannon	Farr	Johnson, Sam
Cantor	Fattah	Jones (NC)
Capito	Feeney	Jones (OH)
Capps	Ferguson	Jordan
Capuano	Filner	Kagen
Cardoza	Flake	Kanjorski
Carnahan	Forbes	Keller
Carney	Fortenberry	Kennedy
Carson	Fossella	Kildee
Carter	Fox	Kilpatrick
Castle	Frank (MA)	Kind
Castor	Franks (AZ)	King (IA)
Chabot	Frelinghuysen	King (NY)
Chandler	Gallegly	Kingston

Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Lamborn
Lampson
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loeback
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaull (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris
Rodgers
McNerney
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Millender-
McDonald
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick

Murphy, Tim
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Oliver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascarell
Pastor
Paul
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Pence
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sali
Sanchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano

Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tancredo
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)
Wamp
Wasserman
Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—7

Buyer
Kaptur
Lucas

McHugh
Norwood
Pickering

Wynn

□ 1419

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONGRESSIONAL PENSION
ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas). The unfinished business is the question of suspending the

rules and passing the bill, H.R. 476, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILENDER-MCDONALD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 476, as amended, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 431, nays 0, not voting 4, as follows:

[Roll No. 49]

YEAS—431

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Davis, Jo Ann
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
Deal (GA)
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doehner
Doolittle
Doyle
Drake
Dreier
Duncan
Edwards
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Emerson
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Everett
Fallin
Farr
Fattah
Burgess
Feeney
Ferguson
Finler
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxy
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves

Conaway
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowsley
Cubin
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseeth
Higgins
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Hulshof
Hunter
Inglis (SC)
Inslie
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee
(TX)
Jefferson
Jindal
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Lamborn
Lampson
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)

Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loeback
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaull (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris
Rodgers
McNerney
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Millender-
McDonald
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Oliver
Ortiz

Pallone
Pascarell
Pastor
Paul
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Pence
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sali
Sanchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus

Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tancredo
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)
Wamp
Wasserman
Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—4

Buyer
Lucas

Norwood
Pickering

□ 1427

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONGRATULATING ILLINOIS
STATE UNIVERSITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LYNCH). The unfinished business is the question of suspending the rules and agreeing to the resolution, H. Res. 57.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Mrs.

DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 57, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 423, nays 0, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 50]

YEAS—423

Abercrombie	Cuellar	Hinojosa
Ackerman	Culberson	Hirono
Aderholt	Cummings	Hobson
Akin	Davis (AL)	Hodes
Alexander	Davis (CA)	Hoekstra
Allen	Davis (IL)	Holden
Altmire	Davis (KY)	Holt
Andrews	Davis, David	Honda
Arcuri	Davis, Jo Ann	Hooley
Baca	Davis, Lincoln	Hoyer
Bachmann	Davis, Tom	Hulshof
Bachus	Deal (GA)	Hunter
Baird	DeFazio	Inglis (SC)
Baker	DeGette	Inslee
Baldwin	Delahunt	Israel
Barrett (SC)	DeLauro	Issa
Barrow	Dent	Jackson (IL)
Bartlett (MD)	Diaz-Balart, L.	Jackson-Lee
Barton (TX)	Diaz-Balart, M.	(TX)
Bean	Dicks	Jefferson
Becerra	Dingell	Jindal
Berkley	Doggett	Johnson (GA)
Berman	Donnelly	Johnson (IL)
Berry	Doolittle	Johnson, E. B.
Biggert	Doyle	Johnson, Sam
Bilbray	Drake	Jones (NC)
Billirakis	Dreier	Jones (OH)
Bishop (GA)	Duncan	Jordan
Bishop (NY)	Edwards	Kagen
Bishop (UT)	Ehlers	Kanjorski
Blackburn	Ellison	Kaptur
Blumenauer	Ellsworth	Keller
Blunt	Emanuel	Kennedy
Boehner	Emerson	Kildee
Bonner	Engel	Kilpatrick
Bono	English (PA)	Kind
Boozman	Eshoo	King (IA)
Boren	Etheridge	King (NY)
Boswell	Everett	Kingston
Boucher	Fallin	Kirk
Boustany	Farr	Klein (FL)
Boyd (FL)	Fattah	Kline (MN)
Boyd (KS)	Feeney	Knollenberg
Brady (PA)	Ferguson	Kucinich
Brady (TX)	Filner	Kuhl (NY)
Bralley (IA)	Flake	LaHood
Brown (SC)	Forbes	Lamborn
Brown, Corrine	Fortenberry	Lampson
Brown-Waite,	Fossella	Langevin
Ginny	Fox	Lantos
Buchanan	Frank (MA)	Larsen (WA)
Burgess	Franks (AZ)	Larson (CT)
Burton (IN)	Frelinghuysen	Latham
Butterfield	Galleghy	LaTourette
Calvert	Garrett (NJ)	Lee
Camp (MI)	Gerlach	Levin
Campbell (CA)	Giffords	Lewis (CA)
Cantor	Gilchrest	Lewis (GA)
Capito	Gillibrand	Lewis (KY)
Capps	Gillmor	Linder
Capuano	Gingrey	Lipinski
Cardoza	Gohmert	LoBiondo
Carnahan	Gonzalez	Loeb
Carney	Goode	Lofgren, Zoe
Carson	Goodlatte	Lowe
Carter	Gordon	Lungren, Daniel
Castle	Granger	E.
Castor	Graves	Lynch
Chabot	Green, Al	Mack
Chandler	Green, Gene	Mahoney (FL)
Clarke	Grijalva	Maloney (NY)
Clay	Gutierrez	Manzullo
Cleaver	Hall (NY)	Marchant
Clyburn	Hall (TX)	Markey
Coble	Hare	Marshall
Cohen	Harman	Matheson
Cole (OK)	Hastert	Matsui
Conaway	Hastings (FL)	McCarthy (CA)
Conyers	Hastings (WA)	McCarthy (NY)
Cooper	Hayes	McCaul (TX)
Costa	Heller	McCollum (MN)
Costello	Hensarling	McCotter
Courtney	Herger	McCrery
Cramer	Herseth	McDermott
Crenshaw	Higgins	McGovern
Crowley	Hill	McHenry

McHugh	Pryce (OH)	Smith (WA)
McIntyre	Putnam	Snyder
McKeon	Radanovich	Solis
McMorris	Rahall	Souder
Rodgers	Ramstad	Space
McNerney	Rangel	Spratt
McNulty	Regula	Stearns
Meehan	Rehberg	Stupak
Meek (FL)	Reichert	Sullivan
Meeks (NY)	Renzi	Sutton
Melancon	Reyes	Tanner
Mica	Reynolds	Tauscher
Michaud	Rodriguez	Taylor
Millender-	Rogers (AL)	Terry
McDonald	Rogers (KY)	Thompson (CA)
Miller (FL)	Rogers (MI)	Thompson (MS)
Miller (MI)	Rohrabacher	Thornberry
Miller (NC)	Ros-Lehtinen	Tiahrt
Miller, Gary	Roskam	Tiberi
Miller, George	Ross	Tierney
Mitchell	Rothman	Towns
Mollohan	Roybal-Allard	Turner
Moore (KS)	Royce	Udall (CO)
Moore (WI)	Ruppersberger	Udall (NM)
Moran (KS)	Rush	Upton
Moran (VA)	Ryan (OH)	Van Hollen
Murphy (CT)	Ryan (WI)	Velázquez
Murphy, Patrick	Salazar	Visclosky
Murphy, Tim	Sali	Walberg
Musgrave	Sánchez, Linda	Walden (OR)
Myrick	T.	Walsh (NY)
Nadler	Sanchez, Loretta	Walz (MN)
Napolitano	Sarbanes	Wamp
Neal (MA)	Saxton	Wasserman
Neugebauer	Schakowsky	Schultz
Nunes	Schiff	Watson
Oberstar	Schmidt	Watt
Obey	Schwartz	Waxman
Oliver	Scott (GA)	Weiner
Ortiz	Scott (VA)	Welch (VT)
Pallone	Sensenbrenner	Weldon (FL)
Pascarella	Serrano	Weller
Pastor	Sessions	Westmoreland
Paul	Sestak	Wexler
Payne	Shadegg	Whitfield
Pearce	Shays	Wicker
Pence	Shea-Porter	Wilson (NM)
Perlmutter	Sherman	Wilson (OH)
Peterson (MN)	Shimkus	Wilson (SC)
Peterson (PA)	Shuler	Wolf
Petri	Shuster	Woolsey
Pitts	Simpson	Wu
Platts	Sires	Wynn
Poe	Skelton	Yarmuth
Pomeroy	Slaughter	Young (AK)
Porter	Smith (NE)	Young (FL)
Price (GA)	Smith (NJ)	
Price (NC)	Smith (TX)	

NOT VOTING—11

Buyer	Lucas	Stark
Cannon	Murtha	Tancredo
Cubin	Norwood	Waters
Hinchey	Pickering	

□ 1436

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY VANCOUVER, WASHINGTON

(Mr. BAIRD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure today to wish happy birthday to America's Vancouver, Vancouver, Washington. I rise in honor of the 150th birthday of Vancouver, Washington. As we say back home, Vancouver not B.C., Washington not D.C.

There was a place up north that was not founded until 29 years later, so we were the first. America's Vancouver was the first incorporated city in what

is now Washington State. It hosts its proud heritage with the Vancouver National Historic Reserve. Fort Vancouver, Pearson Field, the site of the first transpolar aviation landing, a host of historic achievements and wonders.

I would invite everyone to join us in America's Vancouver on July 7 of this year as we officially celebrate America's Vancouver's 150th anniversary.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD an article from the Columbian.

[From the Columbian, Jan. 21, 2007]

HAPPY 150TH!

And the most-senior city in Washington state is . . . Seattle? The biggest city in the Northwest and hub of the state's economy, is a sad non-contender in the competition. It was incorporated in 1869.

And Spokane? The Capital of the Inland Empire, as the second-largest city calls itself, is practically a newborn. It was incorporated in 1881 and just celebrated its 125th birthday anniversary.

Walla Walla is older than that. It came into being in 1862.

But Steilacoom (near Tacoma), now there's an old city: 1854.

That was just one year after the oldest incorporated city in Washington, Columbia City . . . Ooops . . . Columbia City was the name as late as 1850, when it was recognized as more than just a military or fur-trapping post. But when it was incorporated seven years later, on Jan. 23, 1857, as the first city in what would become Washington state, it was Vancouver. Our Vancouver!

The real newcomer is the other Vancouver, in Canada, eh? Incorporation: 1886. So, if nothing else, on Tuesday this week, when Vancouver USA officially turns 150, you might silently pledge to pay no attention the next time someone suggests, as someone always does, that we rename our city Fort Vancouver in order to avoid confusion with the bigger city to the north. We were here first. Let them rename their city.

Much of the story of Vancouver USA's early years and most famous people is efficiently and colorfully told in words and photographs in a special section in today's Columbian, "Vancouver, Washington—150 Years in the Making." Frankly, it's a hoot. There's also an online slide show at columbian.com/video.

Mayor Royce Pollard, who always calls the state's oldest city "America's Vancouver," will deliver his State of the City Address on Tuesday, kicking off a year-long celebration. While acknowledging the past, the speech will fittingly look ahead. Pollard has titled his address, "Pride, Progress, Possibilities."

The signature event of the 150th birthday will be on Saturday, July 7, at the Vancouver National Historic Reserve, which long-time residents still refer to as "The Barracks" and newer residents know as the place they have the big fireworks shows on the Fourth of July. The hope is to get country singer Willie Nelson out for the event. He was a disc jockey in the mid-'50s at the old KVAN radio station, 707½ Main St.

In a Columbian editorial on May 31, 1921, the writer was effusive about the county and the town, noting that it was the world's greatest prune producer, had "industrial possibilities second to no other city on the globe . . . has the finest water in (the) state" and that its "beautiful homes (and) wide streets elicit wonder from its visitors . . ."

Such boosterism brings a snicker today, but you gotta love the spirit behind it and

wish for more like it in this, Vancouver's 150th year.

STATE OF THE UNION ROAD MAP

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, in a few hours we will be listening to the President provide us with a road map for the State of the Union. I ask the President as he comes to this House and this place to recognize that we are in this together and we look forward to working together.

But it certainly should be part of the conscience of this body and of America that our soldiers remain in serious jeopardy, not because they have not done their job, but because we have not done ours.

When soldiers can be dressed in semi-American uniforms and wage attacks on unsuspecting U.S. military, we have a problem.

Mr. Speaker, I am asking for a serious consideration of the cutting of funds to this war in terms of its plus-up, a new direction, and a political diplomatic approach allowing Iraq to provide its own security with our technical support.

It is now time to celebrate the heroes of our military and to bring our soldiers home. I look forward to the message on the State of the Union.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LYNCH). After consultation among the Speaker and the majority and minority leaders, and with their consent, the Chair announces that, when the two Houses meet tonight in joint session to hear an address by the President of the United States, only the doors immediately opposite the Speaker and those immediately to her left and right will be open.

No one will be allowed on the floor of the House who does not have the privilege of the floor of the House. Due to the large attendance that is anticipated, the rule regarding the privilege of the floor must be strictly enforced. Children of Members will not be permitted on the floor. The cooperation of all Members is requested.

The practice of reserving seats prior to the joint session by placard will not be allowed. Members may reserve their seats only by physical presence following the security sweep of the Chamber.

Without prejudice to the possible resumption of legislative business, the Chair will now recognize Members for Special Orders not beyond 5 p.m., at which time the Chair will declare the House in recess.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 217

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that Mr. CROWLEY

from New York be removed from the list of cosponsors for H.R. 217.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. FOXX addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

A TERRORIST GROUP REARMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today in Lebanon, protesters are rioting, burning tires and cars, and crippling Beirut to oppose the government of Lebanese Prime Minister Fuad Saniora.

The majority of the opposition comes from Hezbollah and its supporters seeking more influence in Lebanon's government.

At the same time, one of our close allies is forced to watch these riots as a recurring threat is building on its borders.

Last summer we watched as the terrorist group Hezbollah kidnapped two Israeli soldiers and killed eight others and began firing missiles into Israeli cities intentionally targeting civilian populations and infrastructure.

This group was supplied by Syria and Iran for years, and built up stockpiles of weapons after Israel completely withdrew from southern Lebanon in 2000 in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 425.

Israel responded in self-defense and launched an offensive in southern Lebanon to destroy the weapons caches and Hezbollah's bunkers. Fortunately, the Israeli Air Force was able to destroy many of the longer range rockets Hezbollah possessed, but thousands of shorter-range rockets were indiscriminately fired at Israeli towns and villages.

After 2 months of fighting, United Nations Security Council Resolution

1701 was passed. Among other things, 1701 called for a U.N. peacekeeping force of up to 50,000 troops to assist the Lebanese military to prevent Hezbollah's resurgence and rearmament in southern Lebanon.

Unfortunately, these troops have not stopped Syria and Iran from rearming Hezbollah, and Israel must watch as this threat is re-emerging just miles from its border.

Mr. Speaker, I submit for the RECORD this recent article that appeared in Jane's Defence Weekly. It details some of the problems Lebanese and U.N. forces are having stopping the movement of weapons across the Syrian-Lebanese border. What is clear from this article, and numerous other reports, is that Hezbollah is rearming and gaining autonomy again in southern Lebanon.

Just last week in an interview, Hezbollah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, promised that Hezbollah would intensify its campaign to bring down the Lebanese Government in the coming days and weeks. Israel and the United States cannot let this happen, and we must support Israel's right to defend itself before its civilians are indiscriminately attacked once again.

Over the years, we have watched as Israel has made unilateral concessions, withdrawing from Lebanon in 2000 and withdrawing from Gaza in 2005, and each concession has resulted in growing threats on its borders and attacks on its soldiers and citizens.

After entering southern Lebanon to battle Hezbollah militants last summer, Israel again withdrew under United Nations Resolution 1701, passed sending international troops to southern Lebanon with the promise that the international troops would assist Lebanon's military to prevent Hezbollah from rearming.

Again, the promises of security made to Israel by the international community have not been fulfilled and Hezbollah is getting stronger.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues and the international community to join me in looking for a solution to this situation. As a close ally, we should ensure Israel's hands are not tied while this threat builds on its border, and we should address this growing problem before Hezbollah again decides to attack Israeli soldiers and civilians.

[From Jane's Defence Weekly, Jan. 3, 2007]

IRAN REPLENISHES HIZBULLAH'S ARMS INVENTORY

(By Robin Hughes)

Some five months after UN Resolution 1701 halted the conflict in south Lebanon between Israel and the Islamic Resistance—the armed wing of Shi'ite Party of God (Hizbullah), Iran has replenished Hizbullah's depleted stocks of surface-to-surface rockets and anti-tank guided weapons (ATGWs).

Prior to the onset of the conflict on 12 July, Western intelligence agencies estimated that Hizbullah had amassed an inventory of some 12,000 rockets of various calibres. During the conflict the Islamic Resistance expended about 4,000 rockets, while its longer-range systems, namely the Iranian-

supplied 50 km range Fajr-3, the 70 km range Fajr-S, the 125 km-range Zelzal 1 and 210 km-range Zelzal 2 rocket systems were not employed, having sustained considerable damage as a result of Israel Air Force (IAF) strikes.

Hizbullah emerged from the conflict strategically weaker, and, with the implementation of Resolution 1701, lost its autonomy in south Lebanon.

A Western defence source told Jane's that Iran, with Syrian compliance, has now ramped up deliveries of rockets, ATGWs and other advanced systems in "an effort to rehabilitate Hizbullah's military strength and status".

The underlying message here is one of "unfinished business" or preparation for a second stage of operations.

Ali Akbar Mohtashemi Pour, Iran's former ambassador to Syria and one of the main forces behind the foundation of Hizbullah, confirmed on 1 November in an interview with the AKI news agency that Tehran had begun restocking Hizbullah with weapons. Later, on 6 November, Mohtashemi Pour noted that Tehran had "started to re-arm Hizbullah for all its needs".

The extent of this commitment was borne out in a speech by Hizbullah Secretary General Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah at the Divine Victory Rally in Beirut on 22 September.

"The resistance today has more than 20,000 rockets. The resistance is today stronger than on July 12 and stronger than ever before," he said.

While these numbers have yet to be independently confirmed, the source noted that the Iranian unit charged with liaising with Hizbullah, the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) "Qods Force"—currently headed by IRGC Brigadier General Kazem Soleimani—has, since the end of the conflict, significantly stepped up the transfer of war materiel, along with funding, training and intelligence on Israel, to the Islamic Resistance.

Much of this weapons supply has been facilitated by the compliance of Damascus in smuggling weapons across its borders, the source claimed. "While Iran is the key weapon supplier, Syria was, and still is, the dominant if not exclusive channel for weapons transfer to Hizbullah. This operation is led by Syrian military officers in co-operation with senior IRGC officials in Iran and Syria," the source added.

However, most of the rockets fired on Israel during the conflict were Syrian made and the majority of ATGW deployed by Hizbullah were Russian made, acquired and supplied by Syria.

Terje Roed-Larsen, the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1559, announced on 31 October that he had received reports from Lebanese government officials of "extensive weapons smuggling into Lebanon".

In an unprecedented step, the Lebanese armed forces have deployed over 8,000 troops along the 265 km Lebanon-Syria border to counter these activities.

While they have managed limited successes, "the length of the border and the forces allocated for the mission by the government are insufficient", the sources said.

"Moreover, because of the sensitivity of the issue and the considerable concern over Hizbullah's military strength—where the Lebanese forces do not want to openly confront Hizbullah—the general trend is to turn a blind eye toward the border activity and to detect and cover up exposed weapon smuggling incidents as quickly as possible," the source said.

At the same time, 19 vessels of the reinforced UN Interim Force in Lebanon

(UNIFIL-2) are patrolling Lebanese waters and inspecting ships approaching the country to prevent maritime smuggling.

A Western diplomatic source told Jane's that the Islamic Resistance—citing lessons learned in the early stages of the conflict where it lacked the means to contend with IAF operations—has specifically pressured Iran for "an array of more advanced weaponry, including surface-to-air missile [SAM] systems."

The source said that "following the supply of an undisclosed quantity of Iranian-made Noor [reverse-engineered Chinese C802/YJ-2] radar-guided anti-ship cruise missiles and Chinese QW-1 [Vanguard] shoulder-launched SAMs", Iran has agreed to supply advanced Russian-made SAM systems to Hizbullah as part of its strategy to transform Hizbullah "into a coherent fighting force and a regional strategic arm".

The source added that Tehran will supply Hizbullah with Russian-produced SAMs, including the Strela-2/2M (SA-7 "Grail"), Strela-3 (SA-14 "Gremlin") and Igla-1E (SA-16 "Gimlet") man-portable SAMs. Iran is also understood to have agreed to deliver its own version of the Chinese QW-1 man-portable low- to very-low-altitude SAM system—the Mithaq-1—developed by the Iranian Defence Ministry's Shahid Kazemi Industrial Complex in Tehran.

Iran has, in the interim, set out to restock Hizbullah's inventory of 122 mm Grad-series Katyusha rockets, 240 mm Fajr-3 and 333 mm Fajr-5 rockets, truck-mounted Falaq-1 and Falaq-2 truck-mounted multiple-launch rockets systems, RAAD-T and Toophan ATGWs and Nader improved rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), the source said. However, to date there is no evidence that Tehran is replenishing Hizbullah's Zelzal-series longer-range rockets, although sources suggest these could still be smuggled in separate component packages.

Syria, the source said, continues to resupply Hizbullah with 220 mm and 302 mm rockets (dubbed Raad and Khaibar-1 (M302 by the IDF) respectively); Kornet-E, Metis-M and Konkurs ATGWs; and RPG-29 tandem-warhead RPGs.

These moves come despite offers to Israel from Syrian President Bashar al-Assad on 19 December to crack down on Hizbullah and the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, in exchange for a return to negotiations.

□ 1445

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LYNCH). Pursuant to sections 5580 and 5581 of the Revised Statutes (20 U.S.C. 42-43), and the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following Members of the House to the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution:

Mr. BECERRA, California
Ms. MATSUI, California.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO SELECT INTELLIGENCE OVERSIGHT PANEL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 4(a)(5) of rule X, and the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair announces the Speaker's ap-

pointment of the following Members of the House to the Select Intelligence Oversight Panel of the Committee on Appropriations:

Mr. HOLT, New Jersey, Chairman
Mr. OBEY, Wisconsin
Mr. MURTHA, Pennsylvania
Mr. REYES, Texas
Mr. DICKS, Washington
Mrs. LOWEY, New York
Mr. CRAMER, Alabama
Mr. SCHIFF, California
Mr. LAHOOD, Illinois, Ranking Minority Member
Mr. LEWIS, California
Mr. YOUNG, Florida
Mr. HOEKSTRA, Michigan
Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, New Jersey.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina. (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CONGRATULATING THE RICHLAND SPRINGS COYOTES FOOTBALL TEAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the Richland Springs Coyotes football team for winning the 2006 Six-Man Division 1 State Champions and the Sports Illustrated six-man football poll national championship. With its second national crown in 3 years, Richland Springs becomes only the third school to achieve such an honor.

Playing before a record crowd of 12,000 fans at Abilene's Shotwell Stadium, they defeated the Rule Bobcats by a score of 78-58, finishing the year with a perfect 14-0 record. The Coyotes broke the 1988 record for the highest score in a championship game and amazed the fans with their speed and skill by recovering the on-side kick to open the game.

Six-man football has a long history in Texas. From its beginning in 1938, Texas now has over 102 public schools and as many as 60 private schools continuing this proud tradition of six-man football.

I want to recognize the tireless efforts of Coach Burkhart, Coach Ethridge, Coach Dodson, and Coach Rogers for the national and State titles that they have brought to Richland Springs.

I also want to recognize members of the team: Coey Smith, Jeremiah Ramirez, Cason Fikes, Houston Burleson, Mark Williams, Haustin Burkhart, Kevin Larson, Shelby Smith, James Farris, Nigel Bates, Mitchell Jacobson, Andrew Fowler, Chevy Saldivar, Tyler Ethridge, Richie Daniels, Adrian Avila, Bobby Borders, Khalid Khatib, Patrick

Couch, Genero Hernandez, Randy Couch, Daniel Barrett, Abraham Ahumada, Branch Vancourt, C.J. Finke, Dean King, Dean Charriez, Jesstin Fox, and Ryan Soto.

I congratulate the Richland Springs Coyotes on their national and State championships and wish them the best of luck next season.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE PRESIDENT'S STATE OF THE UNION SPEECH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, well, this evening the President, in bowing to the electoral reality of last November and, with finally some recognition of real problems confronting our Nation and our citizens, is about to begin, in his State of the Union, to address the issue of the need for an expansion of health insurance. Forty-six million Americans lack health insurance, 1 million more per year every year this President has been in office. He will also address the issues of energy efficiency, energy independence, and global warming; and we welcome some remarks from the President in those areas. And he is going to address the debt and the deficit.

We welcome this new focus on these extraordinarily important and difficult issues that have been pretty much ignored during his Presidency. Unfortunately, his rhetorical U-turn is not going to be matched by the reality of his proposals. In order to provide health insurance to 46.1 million people who don't have it, he says we should tax people who do have health insurance.

Now, that is interesting because the President, of course, gets his health insurance for free. And his proposal would also extend tax benefits to the wealthiest among us because many people who don't have health insurance can't benefit from tax breaks. They don't pay Federal income taxes.

That is not a real solution. A real solution would be to take on the anti-trust immunity of the insurance industry, estimated to raise \$45 billion, saving consumers that money. That is the cost of uninsured health care in America.

Energy efficiency and independence, well, we will wait and hear what the President has to say. But remember a year ago, he talked about our addiction to oil, and all his policies have been designed to further that addiction thus far.

On the debt and the deficit, he still wants to cut taxes for the wealthiest

among us. He wants to extend, to make permanent, all of his tax cuts; exempt all estates from taxes; and says he is going to balance the budget. Well, if he was really going to do that by the year 2012, he would have to eliminate the Federal Government except for the Department of Defense, a little bit of the Department of Homeland Security, because the projected deficit is as large as about the rest of the discretionary budget if his tax cuts are maintained. You have to begin to raise revenues from the wealthiest among us to address this gaping maw hole, the deficit.

And then there is one very important problem where he isn't even pretending to change direction, one where a majority of the American people and a majority of the United States disagree with the President's nostrum, and that is his desire to escalate the war in Iraq as a way out. Defying his own Joint Chiefs of Staff and the senior officers and advisers in the military; defying the Prime Minister of Iraq, who said we shouldn't put more Americans into Baghdad; defying the American people; and defying this Congress, the President is going to offer us more stay the course in Iraq and try to spin it into a new policy that will lead to success.

We want to succeed, but to succeed, the Iraqi Government has to be willing to take on some of its own problems. The Shiias and the Sunnis have got to stop slaughtering each other trying to settle a 1,400-year-old grudge and putting us in the middle of their civil war. They have got to begin to meaningfully share power, and they have got to begin to resolve their own issues. And the U.S. sending more troops is not going to lead them down that path.

So I fear that what the President is proposing there will lead to more conflict. It may look good in the short term, but long term it is not going to resolve this very difficult issue.

I hope that the President offers us some real changes in direction tonight and not just a rhetorical U-turn to bow to the reality of the elections.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. POE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

WE NEED A NEW DIRECTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, a State of the Union Address is an opportunity for the Nation to take stock of where it is at this exact moment.

It is obvious that the entire domestic agenda has been swallowed up by the war in Iraq. With over 3,000 U.S. soldiers killed in action; with over 650,000 innocent Iraqi civilians dead in the

war; with this Nation's having spent over \$400 billion in the war and, according to Nobel Prize winning economist Joseph Stiglitz, will spend up to \$2 trillion for the war in Iraq, we have seen the hopes and the aspirations of the American people for more jobs, for better housing, for decent health care, for education for their children just swept aside as the administration focuses intently not only on the war, but escalating the war.

I think all across this country people are hopeful that America will have a new agenda, one which will recognize that we must focus on America's basic needs. It is time for America to come home. Come home and start taking care of the needs of our people here for decent housing, the needs of our people for health care. Over 100 million Americans either have no health insurance or lack access to adequate health insurance, and yet we are about destroying the health of the people of Iraq instead of focusing on the needs of our people here back home.

Martin Luther King said it years ago in his speech at Riverside Church in New York. He said that the hopes and the aspirations of people of two countries were being set aside. He was speaking of Vietnam and the United States. Today the hopes and the aspirations of people of two countries, of Iraq and the United States, are being set aside in this head-long rush to escalation of a war.

Now, what should be our policies, and what steps should we take? First of all, this isn't just about opposing escalation. I would say that is pretty easy to do based on the record of this administration's conduct of the war. But we should be taking a strong stand against the occupation. We should be demanding that the United States end the occupation, that we bring our troops home, that we close our bases. That then will set the precondition that is necessary for the world community to come together and support a peacekeeping and security mission in Iraq. That then sets the stage for the Iraqi people to reach a moment of possibility for reconciliation between the Shiites, the Kurds, and the Sunnis. It is absolutely imperative that the United States announce that it is going to end the occupation because it is the occupation which is fueling the insurgency.

Tonight the Nation is waiting for a new direction. It is not looking for more war. It is not looking for more casualties. It is not looking for a continued destruction of our domestic agenda. So we are here to state that there is a plan, and I have submitted it.

The Kucinich 12-point plan is the plan that sets the stage for America to take a new direction. That direction is out of Iraq, but it is also a direction of reconciling with the world community because the way this administration responded to 9/11 separated us from the world community. At a moment when the whole world was ready to embrace the United States in its suffering and

to work with us to meet the challenges of security, we set ourselves apart with strategies of unilateralism, first strike, and preemption. We need to replace that with strategies of embracing the world community, of working together, of recognizing that the world is interdependent, interconnected. And because of that, we understand the common fate which we all have on this planet to work together, to put together structures of peace internationally.

And the United States must take that direction. We must engage with Iran and Syria. We must reach out to the region and look for a solution and find that solution which will enable us to bring our troops home. We can have our troops home in 3 months if we can come up with an agreement and a new direction, and we should be about that work.

Mr. Speaker, the American people want health care. The American people want jobs. The American people want education for their children. The American people want retirement security. And our whole domestic agenda is sacrificed for this war.

It is time for a new direction. It is time for a State of the Union which celebrates what we have in America that needs to be improved, which restates the American vision of a Nation for all, and which takes us away from policies of endless war.

NAFTA AND THE DRUG TRADE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, this evening we are going to listen to the President of the United States, and I have no doubt in the State of the Union he will talk about the war on terrorism, and he will talk about the need to create jobs in Iraq to stabilize the terrible situation there, and he will talk about more funds for reconstruction of Iraq. Our Nation has already spent over \$500 billion and rising in that sad country.

But I would like to focus on the United States just for a second, if I could, and talk about the terrorism focused inside of this country and point out that 90 percent of all the drugs that are smuggled into this country enter through our border with Mexico, and that is according to our State Department. In fact, under NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement, which his father negotiated, drug and drug-related smuggling across the Mexican border has risen to over \$142 billion a year, according to our Drug Enforcement Agency.

□ 1500

Every single community in our country is affected, not just border communities. Every single jail, every single sheriff, every single law enforcement official, every single prison. Our com-

munities are infected with burglaries, with robberies, with personal assaults related to the abuse of drugs in our country. I will be very interested to see what the President has to say about that war on terrorism tonight that affects every single neighborhood in this country.

NAFTA brings a significant increase in cargo traffic across our southern border and thus strains the enforcement efforts of our border patrols and enables traffickers and terrorists. In fact, 9,300 commercial trucks cross our border daily. 9,300 more trucks. And do you know how many we inspect? Five percent. Five percent. So there is a 95 percent chance for smugglers who are out there, whatever they want to get into this country, that will be their rate of success.

Now, the Mexican Government is working very hard to build a four-lane highway which they call La Entrada al Pacifico, the Entrance from the Pacific. And the idea there would be to redirect so much of the traffic from Asia, from China, these big ships that are bound for the United States, from the west coast, Ports of Los Angeles and Oakland, further south, and stretch the actual shipping lanes into Mexico versus the United States. It is estimated that as much as 30 percent of the truck traffic will also be diverted from California and El Paso to the ports of entry at Presidio.

The idea is that the highway into our country would begin further south where goods would come in in deep-water ports, and the completed route would save up to 4 shipping days for goods moving between the Pacific Rim countries and Texas, which would be one of the major ports of entry into our country.

The problem is that we really haven't addressed the issue of drug smuggling as a part of this. Ninety percent, again, of all drugs smuggled into this country come over the Mexican border. That area has become almost lawless. Hundreds of murders related to drug trafficking go unaddressed both on the Mexican side of that border and our side. We really need to have a border enforcement organization that is negotiated by treaty by amending NAFTA in order that we can have proper enforcement along that very porous part of our country which makes us so vulnerable.

Our border guards are overwhelmed. We know that pedestrian traffic has increased by 55 percent across that border, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration, and all kinds of vehicular traffic. Can you imagine that one place on that border accounts for 70 to 90 percent of the cocaine sold in the United States smuggled through that region? In fact, the drug cartels have moved up their major source of operation in Colombia up to the state of Juarez, and now control the state of Juarez just south of the State of Texas. This is real terrorism poised at our country.

Let's say the people in the Middle East want to get something into the United States. You mean to tell me they haven't thought about this? Of course they have. And we know that drug presence leads to more violence and more corruption at every level.

An unreleased Drug Enforcement Agency report notes that drugs, weapons, people traffickers, and terrorist organizations have to cross the border from Mexico into the United States, and they will use one of the many corridors available to them. I hope that the President of the United States tonight talks about securing our southern border.

[From the Inland Valley Daily Bulletin, Dec. 27, 2006]

CROSSROADS OF CONFLICT—WORLD TRADE BRIDGE HAS CHANGED THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER, FOR GOOD AND BAD

(By Sara A. Carter)

LAREDO, TEXAS.—The mammoth globe on the World Trade Bridge spins in the glow of the Texas moon, welcoming hundreds of cargo trucks from Mexico to the United States' largest inland port.

Nighttime is the slowest time for the bridge.

During the day, literally thousands of trucks cross the span into the U.S., headed for destinations scattered throughout the Midwest and East and north into Canada.

Traffic between Laredo and Nuevo Laredo, on Mexico's side of the bridge, is only expected to increase in coming years with Mexico anticipating billions of dollars in new trade, mainly from China, on its way to the United States, according to a U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration executive summary.

Increasing trade has, however, been matched by growth in corruption and death in both border cities, though U.S. and Mexican officials are loathe to admit it.

\$142 billion in drug trade between the U.S. and Mexico, according to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

86,000 Transportation jobs created as a result of the World Trade Bridge.

9,300 Commercial trucks pass through the World Trade Bridge daily.

90% of all drugs smuggled into the United States enter through its border with Mexico.

The prospect of expanded trade in Mexican states controlled by some of the country's most dangerous cartel leaders could pose serious national security challenges for the United States, an internal DEA report obtained by the Daily Bulletin explains.

The report, which has never been released, examines how already strained federal law enforcement agencies monitoring border security and narcotics will be challenged by not only Mexican and South and Central American drug trafficking organizations, but also by Asian cartels.

With slim resources to monitor cargo and inadequate border security measures in place, it will be next to impossible for U.S. agencies to stem the tide of contraband expected to enter the country from Mexico, the DEA report warns. Agencies will be hard-pressed to monitor the billions of dollars in contraband expected to enter the nation if U.S. officials don't take heed.

"Contraband can be anything from narcotics, pirated videos, humans or weapons of mass destruction," said David Monnette, spokesman for the DEA in El Paso, Texas. "These drug trafficking organizations know that we are spread thin, and many times they use legitimate trade routes to move their contraband into the United States."

This report explains the possible dangers of not addressing these issues."

TRADE ROUTE

A joint venture of Texas and the Mexican government, La Entrada al Pacifico (Gateway to the Pacific) which also is the title of the DEA report is meant to get more goods from Asia north into the United States.

The plan which involves redirecting more than half of East Coast-bound Asian cargo from the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles to Mexico will stretch the power of Mexican cartels while aligning them with Asian drug-trafficking organizations, according to the DEA report. That report focuses on the Mexican port of Topolobampo, Sinaloa, on Mexico's southwestern coast.

But Topolobampo has taken a back seat during the past year to another port, Lázaro Cárdenas, just 72 hours from Laredo.

Lázaro Cárdenas, the deepest container port on the Pacific, is in southern Mexico, in Michoacán. The volume of re-routed trade through it is expected to explode within the next four years.

And that's troubling to U.S. authorities.

"The (plan) represents an expanding threat to the U.S. for drug, weapon and alien smuggling, as well as related crime, through a 260-mile stretch of Texas into the heartland of the U.S.," the report states. "(Drug trafficking organizations) will be able to exploit the new corridor through the use of established smuggling networks and associations with Mexican drug trafficking organizations."

"They may evade U.S. law enforcement under the guise of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and use established Asian communities in the U.S. for the distribution of drugs."

PIGGY-BACKING

Ninety percent of all non-domestic narcotics enter the U.S. through the Mexican border, according to a 2005 U.S. State Department report.

Drugs are a multibillion-dollar industry for cartels in Latin America. The National Drug Intelligence Center conservatively estimates more than \$108 billion roughly equal to the combined gross domestic product of Ecuador and Guatemala in drugs comes into the U.S. yearly. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration puts the figure at \$142 billion in drug trade just between the U.S. and Mexico. Other estimates soar even higher.

"NAFTA has made smuggling drugs across the border easier by several means," including via cargo trucks, the DEA report notes. "The volume of truck traffic coming across the border necessitates the expediting of inspections to the point that few trucks are thoroughly inspected."

More than 9,300 commercial trucks, carrying everything from pinatas to electronics, pass through Nuevo Laredo into Laredo each day, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials. As cargo shifts from Los Angeles to Mexico, it is expected to triple the amount of traffic moving from Mexico through the Texas highway system.

At the same time, drug cartels are using the trucks to piggy-back more than \$10 million a day in drugs through the Laredo corridor into the United States, according to senior DEA officials interviewed by the Daily Bulletin.

The numbers aren't surprising, said TJ Bonner, president of the National Border Patrol Council. In July, Bonner testified before Congress that less than 5 percent of the 6 million cargo containers entering the U.S. each year are physically inspected by U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents.

"From the standpoint of homeland security, this plan (Gateway to the Pacific) is a nightmare," Bonner said. "Any possible benefit of expedited trade is going to be totally

eclipsed by the increased amount of contraband . . . slipping across borders."

Hidden among the televisions, piñatas and clothing are heroin, cocaine and methamphetamine, law enforcement officials say. Worse are weapons and people, and the possibility of terrorist organizations using gaps in border security to put their agents in the United States. ". . . All such ventures have one common factor: They have to cross the border from Mexico into the U.S., and they will use one of several corridors available to do so," the DEA report points out. "La Entrada al Pacifico is one of the corridors."

THE BRIDGE

With the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles already stretched to capacity, Lázaro Cárdenas' ability to handle billions of dollars worth of cargo from Asia is proving a godsend to global corporations and city leaders in the American southwest.

For their part, Port of Los Angeles officials say they don't expect the Mexican port to siphon off anywhere near the amount of cargo called for in the Gateway to the Pacific Plan, though they admit business is booming.

Theresa Adams Lopez, the L.A. port's media director, said she disagrees with the assumption that half of the Asian cargo headed to Los Angeles will be diverted to ports in Mexico.

"Our cargo is expected to double and triple in the upcoming years," she said. "The bulk of it is still going to come in through the Port of L.A. and through our partner, the Port of Long Beach."

"A lot of the problem with new developments like the one in Mexico is the infrastructure rail and roads to get things out. Coming here is literally one stop, and going there would be two stops first from their original destination, and then through Mexico to the United States."

"There is plenty of cargo to go around," she said. "But the contention that half of our business will go away is not true."

Regardless, Laredo officials are pinning their hopes on increased port business, and tout the World Trade Bridge and its ability to handle cargo from places like Lázaro Cárdenas as the lifeblood of Webb County, Texas.

Born out of NAFTA, the bridge signaled the beginning of a bright future with Mexico as a significant partner in North American trade.

According to a 2004 U.S. Census Bureau report, the most recent data available, the Port of Laredo handles more than \$130 billion worth of goods and merchandise each year. Nearly 86,000 transportation jobs have been created since the World Trade Bridge was built. More than 90 percent of the truck traffic between Laredo and Nuevo Laredo goes over it.

Expansion of Lázaro Cárdenas will allow delivery of cargo to the East Coast via the World Trade Bridge four to five days faster than from California, say proponents of the plan especially officials in Laredo, which benefits every time traffic and trade increase.

"NAFTA started moving Laredo away from being the frontier land to the center of something very significant," said Roger Creery, executive director of the Laredo Development Foundation. "We're not the U.S. vs. Mexico vs. Canada anymore. We are the Americas."

Even as Congress held numerous immigration field hearings during the summer to determine the extent of security failures at the U.S. border, private corporations, local and federal government officials and international investment corporations were planning for trade expansion.

Those plans include finishing the Trans-Texas Corridor, which would open the highways to future shipping of cargo from Lázaro Cárdenas, whose biggest investors are Hong Kong-based Hutchison Port Holdings Group and Wal-Mart. Those two firms already have invested more than \$300 million to expand the container port.

For many business and political leaders, the economic growth promised by Gateway to the Pacific and the Trans-Texas Corridor outweighs any perceived danger about national security or increased drug trafficking.

That philosophy seems to be heard even in the words of former Laredo Mayor Elizabeth Flores, who was criticized publicly earlier this year for playing down the escalation of violence in Nuevo Laredo.

"We've lived with the cartels all of our lives," Flores said in an interview a few weeks before she left office. "They are a part of life on the border. Eventually, one will take control, and the killings will slow down."

The business Lázaro Cárdenas will bring to Laredo and Nuevo Laredo could transform both cities, Flores added.

"It's about growth, not death," she said.

With billions of dollars in legal trade at stake, bad publicity simply isn't something business leaders or politicians are willing to acknowledge, others say.

"See no evil, hear no evil," said Webb County Sheriff Rick Flores, who testified before Congress numerous times this year about growing violence in Laredo, the county's largest city, and along the border. "That's the way they want it, and that's what they have done."

VIOLENT NEIGHBOR

Lost in the talk about bigger business and improved trade is the picture of life on the street in Nuevo Laredo.

The drug cartels have compromised truck drivers, U.S. Customs inspectors at ports of entry and business owners on both sides of the river, according to residents and law enforcement officials.

And then there are the killings, which come on a stunningly regular basis.

The sound of gunfire in the distance doesn't seem to shock residents in the heart of Nuevo Laredo. Many of their homes are fortified with thick cement blocks, iron gates and barbed wire protection from the high-powered weapons used by the cartels.

"The government is owned by the cartels," said an older woman returning home. "As the trucks make their way to America freely, we are forced to live like animals. While the rich get richer, we are here dying, and nobody really cares."

Residents in Nuevo Laredo say that the violence has only become worse over the past year. Expansion of trade routes will only heighten the tension and violence among Mexico's cartels, they contend.

"They want to control the routes into the United States," said Nacho, a Nuevo Laredo resident whose real name was withheld to protect his identity. "In a way, they already do. And U.S. officials should be worried, because the cartels will do anything for money. They will kill anyone, help anyone, do anything to get what they need to move contraband across the border for the right price."

The DEA report echoes what Nacho and other residents believe. The possibility of a "direct, nearly inspection-free route to the central U.S. and expanded market for drugs" has or will result in the following, according to the report:

Networks created by Mexican and Asian organized crime organizations to smuggle illegal aliens, counterfeit products and pirated intellectual property into Mexico.

Cargo containers being used to smuggle drugs into the U.S.

Distribution networks being created by Asian gangs in communities.

Creation of legitimate businesses in the U.S. to cover up smuggling, contraband and money laundering.

Expedited truck inspections "to keep substantial backup of trucks from regularly occurring."

The cartels' reach extends well beyond the streets and people of Nuevo Laredo and the border, however.

On Dec. 12, newly elected President Felipe Calderón sent more than 6,500 troops to Michoacán, where the Port of Lázaro Cárdenas is located, in an effort to get a handle on the growing violence.

Calderón also transferred 10,000 troops from the army and navy to the federal police force on Dec. 13, the largest move against narcotics traffickers since his predecessor, former President Vicente Fox, sent nearly 1,000 troops to Nuevo Laredo to squelch a drug war that has killed more than 3,000 people across the country during the past two years.

Calderón may have learned how deadly dealing with the cartels can be. First Lady Margarita Zavala, Calderón's wife, lost her cousin, Luis Felipe Zavala, on Dec. 12 when gunmen open fired on his SUV in Mexico City.

According to DEA intelligence officials, Zavala's assassination was retaliation for Calderón's promise to take down Mexico's drug kingpins. "It was an assassination of opportunity," said one DEA intelligence official who requested anonymity. "... It was directly related to Calderón's move into Michoacán."

However, Mexico's attorney general, Eduardo Medina Mora, told reporters the incident was a coincidence.

"There is at this time no indication ... that would suggest or make us guess that this unfortunate event was related to the Mexican government's efforts against organized crime," he told reporters at a press conference a day after the killing.

Since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, the Department of Homeland Security has tried to beef up security along the border. Officials say new technologies radiation portal monitors, hand-held radiation detectors and X-ray machines assist front-line agents in detecting dangerous materials that may be in trucks at ports of entry.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection spokesman Pat Jones said striking a balance between increased traffic and inspections is challenging. New programs implemented by the Department of Homeland Security have assisted in better checks at ports of entries along the southwest border, he said.

"It may be possible to improve the flow of legitimate trade and improve security," Jones said. "Prior to 9/11, the thought was that if you improve security, you're going to slow down cargo trade. We've learned that if you actually could identify and separate the risk-free cargo, the flow of cargo could be expedited."

But once the illegal cargo finds its way into the U.S., there's little law enforcement can do.

Laredo police can barely keep up with the violence spilling into their community from their sister city across the border. Sheriff Flores said growing violence and corruption in Mexico is spilling into the U.S. and becoming increasingly difficult to manage.

"The cartels have more power, money and weaponry than we do," he said. "The cartels know how to get their narcotics across the (World Trade) bridge. They're not afraid to lose some of their loads; they expect it. The risk is worth it because the possibility of getting caught is minimal, at best."

THE IRAQ WAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WATERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker and Members, tonight the President of the United States will address a joint session of Congress to offer his assessment of the state of the Union. He is expected to spend a lot of time talking about domestic issues and will reportedly spend some time on the war on terror. However, very little, if any, of his State of the Union address will discuss the war in Iraq.

Ladies and gentlemen, the President of the United States has bungled the management of this war, and he certainly needs to explain further why he feels that escalation will suddenly turn the situation in Iraq around. The reality is that escalation will not bring us success. The President pushed forward against the advice of many Members of Congress, the joint chiefs of staff, and many experts in and outside of government. Even the Iraqi Prime Minister did not want more U.S. troops sent to his country.

Since Friday, January 19, 2007, 27 members of our armed services have died in Iraq. These deaths bring the total number of U.S. servicemembers that have died in Iraq since the war in Iraq began to 3,029. More than 22,000 others have been seriously injured.

The insurgent attacks against the United States military have become more and more brazen. In one of the attacks over the past weekend, insurgents wore uniforms that looked like official U.S. uniforms and used vehicles that the U.S. and Iraqi officials use. According to press accounts, Iraqi guards at a government compound allowed several vehicles traveling in a caravan through checkpoints because they were wearing what appeared to be legitimate U.S. military uniforms and driving cars commonly used by foreigners. Once the insurgents were inside the compound, they attacked and killed five of our troops. Witnesses say that the attackers targeted only U.S. servicemembers and not the Iraqis who were in the room. Elsewhere in Iraq, 12 Americans were killed when their Blackhawk helicopter was attacked, and 10 others were killed in fire fights with insurgents.

Mr. Speaker, Iraq is in a civil war. The level of violence is growing each day, and increasingly our troops are caught in the middle of it. By adding more troops, as the President plans to do, we will only increase the risk of more U.S. deaths and injuries.

Nearly everyone agrees that the war will not be won through military means. Instead, there is general agreement that stability in Iraq and the Middle East will only come about through intense diplomatic efforts.

The President's Iraq policy has failed. Sending more troops to Iraq will only make the situation worse. As the saying goes: when you find yourself in

a hole, stop digging. Mr. President, I would urge you to stop digging and bring our troops home.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is what bothers me about what is happening in Iraq. Our military, our troops don't know a Sunni from a Shiite from a Kurd. They are with Iraqi soldiers who don't like them oftentimes, who desert us when there is a confrontation, and who undermine us. There are those who believe that the way that the insurgents got into the compound was they were allowed in there by Iraqi soldiers.

How can we win in the middle of a civil war? We can't win. It is time for the President of the United States to come up with a reasonable exit plan. We have not asked, and nobody is saying, Quick withdrawal. Withdrawal in 24 hours. Some would make you believe we are saying that, but we are not. We are talking about a well thought through reasonable plan for getting out of Iraq. Some people would like to say, Oh, if you don't continue to support the President's request for additional funds, that you are deserting the soldiers. Not so.

And the Members of this Congress have got to have the courage to stand up and explain the difference between the sound bites and what those on the opposite side of this issue would describe as our efforts of getting the soldiers out and the truth. The truth of the matter is we all know there is enough money in the pipeline to credibly come out of Iraq in a timely way.

PUBLICATION OF THE RULES OF THE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES, 110TH CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, In accordance with clause 2 of rule XI of the Rules of the House, I respectfully submit the rules of the Committee on Armed Services for printing in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. On January 10, 2007, the Committee on Armed Services adopted by a unanimous vote, a quorum being present, the following rules:

RULES OF THE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES, 110TH CONGRESS

RULE 1. APPLICATION OF HOUSE RULES

The Rules of the House of Representatives are the rules of the Committee on Armed Services (hereinafter referred to in these rules as the "Committee") and its subcommittees so far as applicable.

RULE 2. FULL COMMITTEE MEETING DATE

(a) The Committee shall meet every Wednesday at 10 a.m., when the House of Representatives is in session, and at such other times as may be fixed by the Chairman of the Committee (hereinafter referred to as the "Chairman"), or by written request of members of the Committee pursuant to clause 2(c) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

(b) A Wednesday meeting of the Committee may be dispensed with by the Chairman, but such action may be reversed by a written request of a majority of the members of the Committee.

RULE 3. SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING DATES

Each subcommittee is authorized to meet, hold hearings, receive evidence, and report to the Committee on all matters referred to it. Insofar as possible, meetings of the Committee and its subcommittees shall not conflict. A subcommittee Chairman shall set meeting dates after consultation with the Chairman, other subcommittee Chairmen, and the Ranking Minority Member of the subcommittee with a view toward avoiding, whenever possible, simultaneous scheduling of committee and subcommittee meetings or hearings.

RULE 4. JURISDICTION AND MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEE AND SUBCOMMITTEES

(a) Jurisdiction

(1) The Committee retains jurisdiction of all subjects listed in clause 1 (c) of rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives and retains exclusive jurisdiction for: defense policy generally, ongoing military operations, the organization and reform of the Department of Defense and Department of Energy, counter-drug programs, acquisition and industrial base policy, technology transfer and export controls, joint interoperability, the Cooperative Threat Reduction program, Department of Energy non-proliferation programs, and detainee affairs and policy. While subcommittees are provided jurisdictional responsibilities in subparagraph (2), the Committee retains the right to exercise oversight and legislative jurisdiction over all subjects within its purview under rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

(2) The Committee shall be organized to consist of seven standing subcommittees with the following jurisdictions:

Subcommittee on Air and Land Forces: All Army and Air Force acquisition programs (except strategic missiles, special operations and information technology programs). In addition, the subcommittee will be responsible for deep strike bombers and related systems, National Guard and Army and Air Force reserve modernization, and ammunition programs.

Subcommittee on Readiness: Military readiness, training, logistics and maintenance issues and programs. In addition, the subcommittee will be responsible for all military construction, installations and family housing issues, including the base closure process.

Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities: Department of Defense counter-proliferation and counter-terrorism programs and initiatives. In addition, the subcommittee will be responsible for Special Operations Forces; science and technology policy, including the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency and information technology programs; force protection policy and oversight; homeland defense and consequence management programs within the committee's jurisdiction; and related intelligence support.

Subcommittee on Military Personnel: Military personnel policy, reserve component integration and employment issues, military health care, military education and POW/MIA issues. In addition, the subcommittee will be responsible for Morale, Welfare and Recreation issues and programs.

Subcommittee on Strategic Forces: Strategic Forces (except deep strike systems), space programs, ballistic missile defense, intelligence policy and national programs and Department of Energy national security programs (except non-proliferation programs).

Subcommittee on Seapower and Expeditionary Forces: Navy and Marine Corps programs (except strategic weapons, space, special operations and information technology programs) and Naval Reserve equipment. In

addition, the subcommittee will be responsible for Maritime programs under the jurisdiction of the Committee as delineated in rule X, clauses 5, 6, and 9 of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations: Any matter within the jurisdiction of the Committee, subject to the concurrence of the Chairman of the Committee and, as appropriate, affected subcommittee chairmen. The subcommittee shall have no legislative jurisdiction.

(b) Membership of the Subcommittees

(1) Subcommittee memberships, with the exception of membership on the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, shall be filled in accordance with the rules of the Majority party's caucus and the Minority party's conference, respectively.

(2) The Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations shall be filled in accordance with the rules of the Majority party's caucus and the Minority party's conference, respectively. Consistent with the party ratios established by the Majority party, all other Majority members of the subcommittee shall be appointed by the Chairman of the Committee, and all other Minority members shall be appointed by the Ranking Minority Member of the Committee.

RULE 5. COMMITTEE PANELS AND TASK FORCES

(a) Committee Panels

(1) The Chairman may designate a panel of the Committee consisting of members of the Committee to inquire into and take testimony on a matter or matters that fall within the jurisdiction of more than one subcommittee and to report to the Committee.

(2) No panel appointed by the Chairman shall continue in existence for more than six months after the appointment. A panel so appointed may, upon the expiration of six months, be reappointed by the Chairman for a period of time which is not to exceed six months.

(3) Consistent with the party ratios established by the Majority party, all Majority members of the panels shall be appointed by the Chairman of the Committee, and all Minority members shall be appointed by the Ranking Minority Member of the Committee. The Chairman of the Committee shall choose one of the Majority members so appointed who does not currently chair another subcommittee of the Committee to serve as Chairman of the panel. The Ranking Minority Member of the Committee shall similarly choose the Ranking Minority Member of the panel.

(4) No panel shall have legislative jurisdiction.

(b) Committee and Subcommittee Task Forces

(1) The Chairman of the Committee, or a Chairman of a subcommittee with the concurrence of the Chairman of the Committee, may designate a task force to inquire into and take testimony on a matter that falls within the jurisdiction of the Committee or subcommittee, respectively. The Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the Committee or subcommittee shall each appoint an equal number of members to the task force. The Chairman of the Committee or subcommittee shall choose one of the members so appointed, who does not currently chair another subcommittee of the Committee, to serve as Chairman of the task force. The Ranking Minority Member of the Committee or subcommittee shall similarly appoint the Ranking Minority Member of the task force.

(2) No task force appointed by the Chairman of the Committee or subcommittee shall continue in existence for more than three months. A task force may only be re-

appointed for an additional three months with the written concurrence of the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the Committee or subcommittee whose Chairman appointed the task force.

(3) No task force shall have legislative jurisdiction.

RULE 6. REFERENCE AND CONSIDERATION OF LEGISLATION

(a) The Chairman shall refer legislation and other matters to the appropriate subcommittee or to the full Committee.

(b) Legislation shall be taken up for a hearing or markup only when called by the Chairman of the Committee or subcommittee, as appropriate, or by a majority of those present and voting.

(c) The Chairman, with approval of a majority vote of a quorum of the Committee, shall have authority to discharge a subcommittee from consideration of any measure or matter referred thereto and have such measure or matter considered by the Committee.

(d) Reports and recommendations of a subcommittee may not be considered by the Committee until after the intervention of three calendar days from the time the report is approved by the subcommittee and available to the members of the Committee, except that this rule may be waived by a majority vote of a quorum of the Committee.

RULE 7. PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF HEARINGS AND MEETINGS

Pursuant to clause 2(g)(3) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Chairman of the Committee, or of any subcommittee, panel, or task force shall make public announcement of the date, place, and subject matter of any hearing before that body at least one week before the commencement of the hearing. However, if the Chairman of the Committee, or of any subcommittee, panel, or task force, with the concurrence of the respective Ranking Minority Member, determines that there is good cause to begin the hearing sooner, or if the Committee, subcommittee, panel, or task force so determines by majority vote, a quorum being present for the transaction of business, such chairman shall make the announcement at the earliest possible date. Any announcement made under this rule shall be promptly published in the Daily Digest, promptly entered into the committee scheduling service of the House Information Resources, and promptly posted to the internet web page maintained by the Committee.

RULE 8. BROADCASTING OF COMMITTEE HEARINGS AND MEETINGS

Clause 4 of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives shall apply to the Committee.

RULE 9. MEETINGS AND HEARINGS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

(a) Each hearing and meeting for the transaction of business, including the markup of legislation, conducted by the Committee, or any subcommittee, panel, or task force, to the extent that the respective body is authorized to conduct markups, shall be open to the public except when the Committee, subcommittee, panel, or task force in open session and with a majority being present, determines by record vote that all or part of the remainder of that hearing or meeting on that day shall be in executive session because disclosure of testimony, evidence, or other matters to be considered would endanger the national security, would compromise sensitive law enforcement information, or would violate any law or rule of the House of Representatives. Notwithstanding the requirements of the preceding sentence, a majority of those present, there being in attendance no fewer than two members of the Committee, subcommittee, panel, or task

force may vote to close a hearing or meeting for the sole purpose of discussing whether testimony or evidence to be received would endanger the national security, would compromise sensitive law enforcement information, or would violate any law or rule of the House of Representatives. If the decision is to proceed in executive session, the vote must be by record vote and in open session, a majority of the Committee, subcommittee, panel, or task force being present.

(b) Whenever it is asserted by a member of the committee or subcommittee that the evidence or testimony at a hearing may tend to defame, degrade, or incriminate any person, or it is asserted by a witness that the evidence or testimony that the witness would give at a hearing may tend to defame, degrade, or incriminate the witness, notwithstanding the requirements of (a) and the provisions of clause 2(g)(2) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, such evidence or testimony shall be presented in executive session, if by a majority vote of those present, there being in attendance no fewer than two members of the Committee or subcommittee, the Committee or subcommittee determines that such evidence may tend to defame, degrade or incriminate any person. A majority of those present, there being in attendance no fewer than two members of the Committee or subcommittee may also vote to close the hearing or meeting for the sole purpose of discussing whether evidence or testimony to be received would tend to defame, degrade or incriminate any person. The Committee or subcommittee shall proceed to receive such testimony in open session only if the Committee or subcommittee, a majority being present, determines that such evidence or testimony will not tend to defame, degrade or incriminate any person.

(c) Notwithstanding the foregoing, and with the approval of the Chairman, each member of the Committee may designate by letter to the Chairman, only one member of that member's personal staff, which may include fellows, with Top Secret security clearance to attend hearings of the Committee, or that member's subcommittee(s), panel(s), or task force(s) (excluding briefings or meetings held under the provisions of committee rule 9(a)), which have been closed under the provisions of rule 9(a) above for national security purposes for the taking of testimony. The attendance of such a staff member or fellow at such hearings is subject to the approval of the Committee, subcommittee, panel, or task force as dictated by national security requirements at that time. The attainment of any required security clearances is the responsibility of individual members of the Committee.

(d) Pursuant to clause 2(g)(2) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, no Member, Delegate, or Resident Commissioner may be excluded from nonparticipatory attendance at any hearing of the Committee or a subcommittee, unless the House of Representatives shall by majority vote authorize the Committee or subcommittee, for purposes of a particular series of hearings on a particular article of legislation or on a particular subject of investigation, to close its hearings to Members, Delegates, and the Resident Commissioner by the same procedures designated in this rule for closing hearings to the public.

(e) The Committee or the subcommittee may vote, by the same procedure, to meet in executive session for up to five additional consecutive days of hearings.

RULE 10. QUORUM

(a) For purposes of taking testimony and receiving evidence, two members shall constitute a quorum.

(b) One-third of the members of the Committee or subcommittee shall constitute a quorum for taking any action, with the following exceptions, in which case a majority of the Committee or subcommittee shall constitute a quorum:

(1) Reporting a measure or recommendation;

(2) Closing committee or subcommittee meetings and hearings to the public;

(3) Authorizing the issuance of subpoenas;

(4) Authorizing the use of executive session material; and

(5) Voting to proceed in open session after voting to close to discuss whether evidence or testimony to be received would tend to defame, degrade, or incriminate any person.

(c) No measure or recommendation shall be reported to the House of Representatives unless a majority of the Committee is actually present.

RULE 11. THE FIVE-MINUTE RULE

(a) The time anyone member may address the Committee or subcommittee on any measure or matter under consideration shall not exceed five minutes and then only when the member has been recognized by the Chairman or subcommittee chairman, as appropriate, except that this time limit may be exceeded by unanimous consent. Any member, upon request, shall be recognized for not more than five minutes to address the Committee or subcommittee on behalf of an amendment which the member has offered to any pending bill or resolution. The five-minute limitation shall not apply to the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the Committee or subcommittee.

(b)(1) Members who are present at a hearing of the Committee or subcommittee when a hearing is originally convened shall be recognized by the Chairman or subcommittee chairman, as appropriate, in order of seniority. Those members arriving subsequently shall be recognized in order of their arrival. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Chairman and the Ranking Minority Member will take precedence upon their arrival. In recognizing members to question witnesses in this fashion, the Chairman shall take into consideration the ratio of the Majority to Minority members present and shall establish the order of recognition for questioning in such a manner as not to disadvantage the members of either party.

(2) The Chairman of the Committee or a subcommittee, with the concurrence of the respective Ranking Minority Member, may depart with the regular order for questioning which is specified in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this rule provided that such a decision is announced prior to the hearing or prior to the opening statements of the witnesses and that any such departure applies equally to the Majority and the Minority.

(c) No person other than a Member, Delegate, or Resident Commissioner of Congress and committee staff may be seated in or behind the dais area during Committee, subcommittee, panel, or task force hearings and meetings.

RULE 12. POWER TO SIT AND ACT; SUBPOENA POWER

(a) For the purpose of carrying out any of its functions and duties under rules X and XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee and any subcommittee is authorized (subject to subparagraph (b)(1) of this paragraph):

(1) to sit and act at such times and places within the United States, whether the House is in session, has recessed, or has adjourned, and to hold hearings, and

(2) to require by subpoena, or otherwise, the attendance and testimony of such witnesses and the production of such books, records, correspondence, memorandums, pa-

pers and documents, including, but not limited to, those in electronic form, as it considers necessary.

(b) (1) A subpoena may be authorized and issued by the Committee, or any subcommittee with the concurrence of the full Committee Chairman and after consultation with the Ranking Member of the Committee, under subparagraph (a)(2) in the conduct of any investigation, or series of investigations or activities, only when authorized by a majority of the members voting, a majority of the Committee or subcommittee being present. Authorized subpoenas shall be signed only by the Chairman, or by any member designated by the Committee.

(2) Pursuant to clause 2(m) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, compliance with any subpoena issued by the Committee or any subcommittee under subparagraph (a)(2) may be enforced only as authorized or directed by the House of Representatives.

RULE 13: WITNESS STATEMENTS

(a) Any prepared statement to be presented by a witness to the Committee or a subcommittee shall be submitted to the Committee or subcommittee at least 48 hours in advance of presentation and shall be distributed to all members of the Committee or subcommittee as soon as practicable but not less than 24 hours in advance of presentation. A copy of any such prepared statement shall also be submitted to the Committee in electronic form. If a prepared statement contains national security information bearing a classification of secret or higher, the statement shall be made available in the Committee rooms to all members of the Committee or subcommittee as soon as practicable but not less than 24 hours in advance of presentation; however, no such statement shall be removed from the Committee offices. The requirement of this rule may be waived by a majority vote of the Committee or subcommittee, a quorum being present. In cases where a witness does not submit a statement by the time required under this rule, the Chairman of the Committee or subcommittee, as appropriate, with the concurrence of the respective Ranking Minority Member, may elect to exclude the witness from the hearing.

(b) The Committee and each subcommittee shall require each witness who is to appear before it to file with the Committee in advance of his or her appearance a written statement of the proposed testimony and to limit the oral presentation at such appearance to a brief summary of the submitted written statement.

RULE 14. ADMINISTERING OATHS TO WITNESSES

(a) The Chairman, or any member designated by the Chairman, may administer oaths to any witness.

(b) Witnesses, when sworn, shall subscribe to the following oath: "Do you solemnly swear (or affirm) that the testimony you will give before this Committee (or subcommittee) in the matters now under consideration will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?"

RULE 15. QUESTIONING OF WITNESSES

(a) When a witness is before the Committee or a subcommittee, members of the Committee or subcommittee may put questions to the witness only when recognized by the Chairman or subcommittee chairman, as appropriate, for that purpose according to Rule 11 of the Committee.

(b) Members of the Committee or subcommittee who so desire shall have not more than five minutes to question each witness or panel of witnesses, the responses of the witness or witnesses being included in the

five-minute period, until such time as each member has had an opportunity to question each witness or panel of witnesses. Thereafter, additional rounds for questioning witnesses by members are within the discretion of the Chairman or subcommittee chairman, as appropriate.

(c) Questions put to witnesses before the Committee or subcommittee shall be pertinent to the measure or matter that may be before the Committee or subcommittee for consideration.

RULE 16. PUBLICATION OF COMMITTEE HEARINGS AND MARKUPS

The transcripts of those hearings and mark-ups conducted by the Committee, subcommittee, or panel will be published officially in verbatim form, with the material requested for the record inserted at that place requested, or at the end of the record, as appropriate. Any requests to correct any errors, other than those in transcription, or disputed errors in transcription, will be appended to the record, and the appropriate place where the change is requested will be footnoted. Any transcript published under this rule shall include the results of record votes conducted in the session covered by the transcript and shall also include materials that have been submitted for the record and are covered under Rule 19. The handling and safekeeping of these materials shall fully satisfy the requirements of Rule 20. No transcript of an executive session conducted under Rule 9 shall be published under this rule.

RULE 17. VOTING AND ROLLCALLS

(a) Voting on a measure or matter may be by record vote, division vote, voice vote, or unanimous consent.

(b) A record vote shall be ordered upon the request of one-fifth of those members present.

(c) No vote by any member of the Committee or a subcommittee with respect to any measure or matter shall be cast by proxy.

(d) In the event of a vote or votes, when a member is in attendance at any other committee, subcommittee, or conference committee meeting during that time, the necessary absence of that member shall be so noted in the record vote record, upon timely notification to the Chairman by that member.

(e) The Chairman of the Committee or a subcommittee, as appropriate, with the concurrence of the Ranking Minority Member or the most senior Minority member who is present at the time, may elect to postpone requested record votes until such time or point at a mark-up as is mutually decided. When proceedings resume on a postponed question, notwithstanding any intervening order for the previous question, the underlying proposition shall remain subject to further debate or amendment to the same extent as when the question was postponed.

RULE 18. COMMITTEE REPORTS

(a) If, at the time of approval of any measure or matter by the Committee, any member of the Committee gives timely notice of intention to file supplemental, Minority, additional or dissenting views, that member shall be entitled to not less than two calendar days (excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays except when the House is in session on such days) in which to file such views, in writing and signed by that member, with the staff director of the Committee. All such views so filed by one or more members of the Committee shall be included within, and shall be a part of, the report filed by the Committee with respect to that measure or matter.

(b) With respect to each record vote on a motion to report any measure or matter, and

on any amendment offered to the measure or matter, the total number of votes cast for and against, the names of those voting for and against, and a brief description of the question, shall be included in the committee report on the measure or matter.

RULE 19. PUBLIC INSPECTION OF COMMITTEE ROLLCALLS

The result of each record vote in any meeting of the Committee shall be made available by the Committee for inspection by the public at reasonable times in the offices of the Committee. Information so available for public inspection shall include a description of the amendment, motion, order, or other proposition and the name of each member voting for and each member voting against such amendment, motion, order, or proposition and the names of those members present but not voting.

RULE 20. PROTECTION OF NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION

(a) Except as provided in clause 2(g) of Rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, all national security information bearing a classification of secret or higher which has been received by the Committee or a subcommittee shall be deemed to have been received in executive session and shall be given appropriate safekeeping.

(b) The Chairman of the Committee shall, with the approval of a majority of the Committee, establish such procedures as in his judgment may be necessary to prevent the unauthorized disclosure of any national security information received classified as secret or higher. Such procedures shall, however, ensure access to this information by any member of the Committee or any other Member, Delegate, or Resident Commissioner of the House of Representatives, staff of the Committee, or staff designated under Rule 9(c) who have the appropriate security clearances and the need to know, who has requested the opportunity to review such material.

RULE 21. COMMITTEE STAFFING

The staffing of the Committee, the standing subcommittees, and any panel or task force designated by the Chairman or chairmen of the subcommittees shall be subject to the rules of the House of Representatives.

RULE 22. COMMITTEE RECORDS

The records of the Committee at the National Archives and Records Administration shall be made available for public use in accordance with rule VII of the Rules of the House of Representatives. The Chairman shall notify the Ranking Minority Member of any decision, pursuant to clause 3(b)(3) or clause 4(b) of rule VII, to withhold a record otherwise available, and the matter shall be presented to the Committee for a determination on the written request of any member of the Committee.

RULE 23. HEARING PROCEDURES

Clause 2(k) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives shall apply to the Committee.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for half the time remaining before 5 p.m. as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to address the House, and I can share with you on this day of the State of the Union we all look forward to hearing what the President/Com-

mander in Chief has to share not only with the country but the world, and we hope that he will bring words of wisdom and unity to the House floor. This will be the President's seventh opportunity coming to the floor to share with us the needs of the Nation. And I hope that he speaks on behalf of the entire Nation.

As you know, the 30-Something Working Group has been coming to the floor for the last 3 years sharing with the Members about what was going on under the Capitol dome and what wasn't going on under the Capitol dome. And we come today in the spirit of bipartisanship, Mr. Speaker, and I would also like to continue to highlight bipartisanship, because that is what the American people have called for and that is what we have delivered.

And when I say "we," I am saying a majority of the Members of the House of Representatives, and you can sprinkle in some Republican votes in achieving that. And I am glad that on a number of votes as relates to the Medicare prescription drug price negotiating, all Democrats on the floor voted for that, 24 Republicans voted for it, too. They voted with their constituents.

The Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act, just about all the Democrats on the floor voting on behalf, 216 with 37 Republicans joining us on that vote, it was 253, which is a good majority of the House voting in the affirmative. That is bipartisan.

The Fair Minimum Wage Act, Mr. Speaker, that passed on January 10, which was a recorded vote, there were 315 years in the affirmative, all Democrats on the floor at that time voted for it, 82 Republicans joined Democrats in voting on that bill together, Mr. Speaker.

Again, in the implementation of the 9/11 Commission recommendations, which we all know, Mr. Speaker, was a bipartisan piece of work by individuals that were appointed by the President, the leadership, and the House and Senate at that time, with two bipartisan chairmen, one Republican and the vice chair was Democrat, all Democrats on the floor voted, 231, and 68 Republicans. That brought that vote to 299.

I think it is important, Mr. Speaker, as we continue to move on and as we look at the student loan vote, as we look at a number of the votes that have come here to the floor, a great vote today as relates to pensions for those that step out of the line, Members of the House that step out of line and Members of the Senate, that their pensions will be on the line. Not one vote against that measure.

In that spirit, I know, on behalf of the Democratic side of the aisle, the Speaker, majority leader, Democratic whip, the chairman of our caucus, the vice chair of our caucus, and other elected leadership within the Democratic Caucus are looking to continue this bipartisan spirit that we have adopted here.

As you know, in the 109th Congress, Mr. Speaker, I used to always share with the Members that bipartisanship is only allowed if the majority allows it. I think that on some issues we will see issues where we won't be able to see eye to eye and there will be some partisan votes on this floor. That is just the reality of life here in Washington, D.C., but it should not be the rule. It should be the exception. And I want to commend all of those Members that are moving in a bipartisan spirit.

Now, I must say the winds of bipartisanship are here on the floor. I am sad to report that on many of those votes the Republican leadership did not vote with the majority of the U.S. House of Representatives, including Republicans that did vote on those measures. I say this to promote a bipartisan spirit here when the State of the Union, when the President comes in and gives his speech tonight; when he comes to speak to the American people in the U.S. House, the U.S. Congress, Judiciary, all branches of the military that will be represented here tonight, Cabinet officers that will be represented here tonight, hopefully deliver a message that we can move forward as a unit, as all Americans, so something we can all grasp.

□ 1515

I think it is important to move in that direction.

Now, on our side of many of these issues, when I say "our side," I am saying the Democratic side where we have talked about six in 2006, where Republicans have joined us in those efforts because they wanted to vote for it all along but their leadership would not allow them to do that. We want to continue. We want to lead by example. We want the American people to know that we are leading on behalf of the country, not just one side versus the other. We do not want to create that kind of environment; but when it has to take place, it has to take place.

Tonight, Senator WEBB, Virginia, will be delivering the Democratic response to the President, and I think it is important if we can see eye to eye on a policy in Iraq because right now, as you know, a number of the Senators on the other side of the Capitol dome have disagreed with the surge policy or with the escalation of troops policy that we have now that the President has stepped forward with. Many Members of the House on both sides of the aisle disagree with that policy.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, a number of Americans spoke not only to Democratic candidates but to Republican candidates about a solution in Iraq versus just identifying a problem and continuing to add on to the unfortunate situation of U.S. troops losing their lives in Iraq.

I think it is also important for us to know that for us to work in a bipartisan way the President cannot continue to say, just because I have the power to deploy troops along with my advisers that I am going to do it. I

think a level of responsibility has to kick in.

Mr. Speaker, I was talking to a group earlier today, and I shared with them that the watch word for the 110th Congress should be "responsibility," responsibility on both sides of the aisle to make sure that we can fight our way out of the record deficit that we have now and to be able to stick with our pay-as-we-go rules that we put in place; to make sure that we govern on behalf of all the American people need it be young or old, rich or poor; that we govern on behalf of Americans and not on behalf of the special interests; and to make sure that our children's children and we have safe, clean water, air to breathe; and that we can provide health care.

Now, saying all of that, it cannot be my way or the highway. Mr. Speaker, the President has put forth a commission to look at Social Security more than two times, and at the end of all of those commissions, the President has come back and said we need to privatize Social Security. That is a my-way-or-highway approach to governing.

I think it is important that the President come to this floor tonight and the Congress respond in a way that we can work together, we can work together to make America better. We can work together to make sure that our troops in Iraq, hopefully more sooner than later, can be redeployed, and that we can call not only on the Iraqi Government but other countries throughout the world to take part in the security of that region. As long as we continue to have an escalation in troops without any questions asked, we are going to have problems.

Now, I am glad to be joined here by my good colleague and friend from the great State of Ohio, NILES, Ohio, and we have spent many an hour on the floor here talking about these issues, but I was sharing with the Speaker and with the Members the fact when the President comes here tonight that it is important that it is a message that all Americans can embrace, that we deal with the serious issues so that we can get on with the work of the American people, because shortly after he gives his speech, he is going to send his budget to Capitol Hill, and that is going to have a lot to do with the way this Congress is going to function in this first session of the 110th Congress.

Hopefully, we will be able to pass a budget that will work on behalf of the American people, but it cannot be a my-way-or-the-highway kind of approach that it has been in the past. That did not work well, even when his party had the majority here in the Congress. Imagine what will happen, and they do have the minority in this Congress.

But we are willing, Mr. Speaker, to work in a bipartisan way to make sure we can get something done. I think that is very, very important. I think that is what the American people are asking for, and I yield to my friend.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate how the gentleman has been focused on bipartisanship over the past several weeks since we have been here.

I agree with my friend from Florida on several issues. Just to go back a few seconds, to talk about what is going on in Iraq and what really the President's plan has been, and I think it is important that we remove this from any kind of partisanship.

As we have shown in the past couple weeks here, I mean, the votes that we have passed here have consistently been passed in a bipartisan way. Minimum wage, student loans, Medicare and negotiations, all of these have been passed in a bipartisan way. So the tone that Speaker PELOSI has set in this House has been a tone of bipartisanship.

The concern that we have in Iraq at this point with the troop surge is that this President does not have the support of the American people. He does not have the support of the Democratic Party. He is losing support among the Republican Party, and the former Chair of the Senate Committee on Armed Services, JOHN WARNER, has now come out against the President's proposal. The military, for the most part, is against this proposal. It seems like almost everyone who was in the Bush administration who had been in the military under this Commander in Chief and has left is now against what the President is saying. The Iraqi leadership is against it.

The only people who are for this is the administration, and I think it is important for us to recognize that we need to get out in a way that makes sure that we retain our dignity and that we redeploy. No one's talking about cutting and running, but redeploy in a responsible way and getting our kids out of harm's way, because this has been botched from the get-go.

But I think it is important, and I appreciate you consistently focusing. We have talked for 3½ or 4 years about if we get in charge we are going to do it in a bipartisan way, and we have been able to maintain that over the past couple of weeks, and I think it is important that we continue to go down that road.

If you look at, and I do not want to talk too long because I know my friend has an interest in joining, I want to look at the, Mr. Speaker, first 100 hours, at what we have been able to.

Okay. This has kind of gone in two different directions. Pass the minimum wage, reduce student loan interest rates, cut them in half, and allow the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate down drug prices. So if you are an average family, those are three major steps forward where you are going to make more money, if you have a minimum-wage worker, where you have less student loans to pay because the interest rate is going to be cut in half, and the prescription drug prices that your parents and grandparents are paying will be a lot less. So

that is going to be significant savings in the short term.

But now we have our long-term program, and if you look at where the Democratic Party and Speaker PELOSI is pushing our agenda, we have investments into stem cell research, which is something that we passed in this Chamber just a few days ago, that we are going to invest into this new and great and vibrant industry and new sector of our economy that is not only going to reap tremendous health care benefits for our citizens but also provide jobs for our scientists and our researchers and funding the research and development and partnering with private sector people.

That is going to create an economic boom in the United States of America because once we pass it, if we can get it past the President, that is going to be a heck of a move on our part. I think it is going to be great for the American people, and it is going to be great for the next generation of people coming out of college and coming out of medical school and getting their Ph.D.s. We are going to have a whole other sector of the economy.

In addition to the repealing of the corporate welfare, which I know you had talked a lot about on this floor the past couple of years, repealing the corporate welfare that we gave to the oil companies and the energy companies and putting that money into research for alternative energy sources, creating and pushing a whole other sector of our economy so that we do not depend on the Middle East for our energy, we got it right in the Midwest in the United States of America.

So we are stabilizing. We are taking care of people today. We are giving the American people a pay raise, cutting student loan interest rates in half, reducing the cost of prescription drugs now, and then in the future moving into these two major growth areas of alternative energy and stem cell research and into the health care industry.

I think Leader PELOSI and Mr. HOYER and Mr. CLYBURN and Mr. LARSON and Mr. EMANUEL have all set an agenda for the Democrats in the House to do some good in the short term and then to open up these other areas of the economy in the long term.

So with that I would be happy to yield back to my good friend, my dear friend from Florida (Mr. MEEK).

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Well, I think it is important that we have a real discussion back and forth on this very issue.

We talked about the President coming to the floor and hopefully bringing about and, well, promoting bipartisanship, coming to the floor and saying there are some good things that have happened here; you know, hey recognize the historical moment of having the first female Speaker in the history of the country; but secondly, dealing with some of the major issues.

I understand, Mr. Speaker, in his speech on Iraq he is going to say what

he says and says he sent the escalation troops. He is going to stick with it or my way or the highway. It is the wrong approach and it is going to inflame the American people and Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle.

Also, I would like to say, even when it comes down to the issue of the minimum wage, I know that the President has said, well, you know, I like the minimum wage but there are some things that I would like to do. That is fine, but as far as I am concerned, when it comes down to the bill, signing it, he needs to be overjoyed to sign it because that is what the American people want. It is not just Democrats. I mean, the American people want to see folks that are making \$5.15 an hour to make \$7.15 or greater because when they make more, the American people make more, salaried workers, because their pay is going to go up.

I see Mr. RYAN has something there he is going to go a little further into it. Stem cell research, folks may have issues here and there, but the bottom line is the American people have spoken in many of these Senate races and many of these House races, and they have spoken because they want their loved ones to have a better chance in beating some of the terminal cancer that is out there right now and diseases that so many Americans are suffering through and their family members are trying to fight through those issues.

The bipartisan 9/11 Commission, Mr. Speaker, why fight on the commas and the periods saying that, well, we believe that we are already doing that. Well, apparently you must not be doing it because the 9/11 Commission has given you Ds and Fs in those areas that you say that you are already doing it.

So not just because we got to the cafeteria first we get an opportunity at the only oatmeal cookie that is left. It is the fact that we have to secure America. This goes beyond I thought of this first or I thought of this second.

The American people said they want the full implementation of the 9/11 Commission, and that is what we gave them. The majority vote here in this House and will be a majority vote in the Senate and will have the opportunity to go to the White House and hopefully the President will implement those recommendations, it is to make America safer. It is not because it was not your original thought to do it, and I am hoping that he comes to the floor and embraces that on behalf of all of our safety.

I do not think that I need to advise the President in any way, but I think that on behalf of all of us, if we are going to continue the spirit that we have started and bipartisanship and having the least friction as possible, especially on issues that we should not even be debating on, the issues that I have outlined, they are not even issues that are brand-new issues. These are issues that have been talked about in committee, talked about it in commissions, even as it relates to campaigns to get to Congress.

The issue of the investment on Big Oil, the billions of dollars in subsidies, and now we have reversed and put them in the clean, renewable energy, that should not even be a debate.

□ 1530

It should not even be, well, I agree with it or I don't agree with it. You should agree with it, because we need it more now than ever.

One of the big issues now, Mr. RYAN, when it all boils down to redeployment of our troops in Iraq, all of this is a vicious circle of irresponsibility in the past, or a lack of responsibility, and making sure that we are able to carry out not only diplomatic responsibility, but legislative responsibility and oversight.

I think the reason we have had the escalation in troops, Mr. RYAN, is prior to the lights being illuminated or the committee rooms being illuminated to have hearings on what we should do in Iraq, how we should work in a diplomatic way in Iraq, what kind of leadership should we have in Iraq, now that is happening with the confirmation of a new general to take over the command in Iraq.

I think it is important, Mr. RYAN, that we move in the direction that we have been moving in, and that is in a bipartisan direction, that is in a direction that the supermajority of American people agree with. Let's get those things off the table. Let's start fine-tuning these issues of six in '06. I think some of the Republican leadership just has issues with the fact it is part of six in '06 and "we have to be against it, because we didn't do it when we had the opportunity to do it."

I can care less about what happened in the last Congress. I do care about what is happening in this Congress, Mr. RYAN, and what is happening in the future Congresses. Because when folks woke up at 7 o'clock in the morning on a Tuesday morning and voted for representation, they voted for leadership, they voted for bipartisanship, they voted for a Washington, D.C., especially under the Capitol dome, Americans coming together, because we are all Americans, coming together on behalf of the greater good.

That is what they are counting on. That is what we should give them. The majority of the Members of the House should give that to them. When I am speaking of the majority members of the House, I am talking about Republicans too. I am talking about all of us coming together on their behalf.

So, to hear these issues tonight, it is going to be very, very important. The President has a choice. If he wants to come to the floor, Mr. Speaker, and continue to give the same speech that he has been giving in the past, it will be very, very unfortunate. But if he comes to the floor tonight talking about how he would like to work with the Democratic Congress and work with the Democratic leadership and the Republican leadership, and the same

thing over in the House and the Senate, work in a bipartisan way, if he used the words "bipartisan Congress," I think he will be more successful in passing legislation that we can all come together on and that we do have an input in it, because we will have input in it, and we should not dig in and deny the American people of this great opportunity, Members, to see advancement in health care, to see some advancement in the issue of Iraq and Afghanistan at the same time, and to see some level of advancement in having clean air for our children and renewable fuel here in America, investing in the Midwest versus the Middle East.

I yield to my friend from Ohio.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Well, I appreciate that. This is something you mentioned about being bipartisan and working in a bipartisan way. I think what has happened here has been very successful, and I think this kind of illustrates it.

A couple of the things that the Democratic leadership and the Democratic Caucus, with some help from the Republicans on the other side, have been very successful. This is what has happened just in the first 100 hours, should this all become law.

You look at the minimum wage being raised. It means \$4,400 a year for the average minimum wage worker. So over the next 5 years, the average person will make another \$22,000 because of what happened here in this Chamber, led by Speaker PELOSI in a bipartisan way with a handful of Republicans who were able to do that, 80 or 90, I think.

College loan interest rates cut over 5 years will save about \$1,473. Total earnings and savings for a family over 5 years will be \$23,473.

This is bread and butter stuff. This is what will be implemented if we can get it through the other side and signed by the President. This is good stuff. This is what we can do in a bipartisan way.

So, I think this kind of stuff is important to move the country forward. When we do that, I think we open up a lot of opportunities for a lot of people around the country, and really around the world, because of the opportunity that we would provide here. This is the kind of bipartisan agenda that we want to continue with.

We are joined hereby a rising star already making a name for himself down here in Congress, our good friend from Connecticut, Mr. MURPHY.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Thank you, Mr. RYAN. I am only making a name for myself by associating myself with the works and deeds of Mr. MEEK and Mr. RYAN.

You are exactly right. As you know, I am able to join you here as a second time as a new Member of this Congress.

What we were charged with doing was really taking back this House and this place for people who are struggling every day to make ends meet. The cost of tuition since 2001 has gone up 41 percent, while we know wages have essentially remained stagnant, the min-

imum wage staying exactly where it has been for the last 2 years, while the cost of everything from food to school to gas goes up exponentially.

What we are doing here, piece by piece, is really restoring that American dream, that idea your kids might be able to do better than you, that your grandkids are going to live in a world with a greater quality of life than you were able to live in. The first 100 hours were about doing that, and, as I know you both have remarked, doing it in a bipartisan way, doing it in a way in which the votes that came before in the first 2 weeks drew an average of 60 Republican votes.

As Mr. MEEK was saying as I walked into the Chamber, I think the President tonight will find a very receptive Democratic side of the aisle if he seeks to embrace that same type of middle-class/working-class agenda that we have made really the central feature of this place for the last 2 weeks.

Mr. RYAN, if I might, I wanted to talk just for a moment about health care, because we are going to hear something from the President that, unfortunately, we have heard for the last several years. We have heard that the President wants to focus on the rising costs of health care, the trouble that middle-class families are finding in trying to find insurance.

It is about time on the issue of health care that this administration starts to meet words with action. We have seen a lot of verbal compassion, but we haven't seen a lot of meaningful reform from this administration, as the profits being made by those who would make money off of this health care system are in record numbers today. We are seeing on the other side record numbers of families falling into the ranks the uninsured.

Tonight we are going to hear a proposal that will essentially lop off families who are receiving good insurance and put them into the ranks of those families that have very bad insurance or are underinsured. Essentially the President is going to propose tonight to make health care cheaper and worse, whereas the Democrats, we know we can find a way to make health care cheaper and better.

I simply look forward, Mr. RYAN, to engaging the President on that debate and trying to convert he and his administration to the new-found wisdom we found in this Chamber to put middle-class families rather than those lobbyists and corporate interests first.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his remarks. The President only has a couple years left, Mr. Speaker, and I hope he really uses this as an opportunity to try to reengage Congress and reengage the American people and have some bold initiatives too. And not just the rhetoric. Because we went through and our staffs went true and were comparing everything that the President had said in previous State of the Union addresses and then what the reality is, and

you can pick an issue, and we will give you the Web site and you can go and check it all out. So a very skeptical Congress will be here listening tonight.

But I hope in regards to health care that we can really focus. Of course, we want everyone covered. But if you think about it, we actually have a universe health care system right now, but it is just run through emergency rooms. It is run in the most inefficient, ineffective way that you could possibly set up a health care system. So it is really not even a system, but it is just health care kind of.

What we need to do is try to get some of this investment on the front end, make sure our kids through SCHIP have access to health care, and that we are reaching out and communicating and pulling in people who may qualify for some of these programs but don't actually sign up for them. What is the outreach going to be? Because as we are competing a global economy, as we have talked 1 million times on this floor, we only have 300 million people in the United States of America. We are now competing against China, who has 1.3 billion, India who has a billion, and everyone else on the globe. We only have 300 million.

So we have to make our best efforts count, because we need all 300 million on the field playing for us, especially these young kids who are coming up through the ranks. That is why I think it is important when we are talking about the minimum wage and we are talking about making sure that student loan rates are cut in half so we can have more kids go to college, and then we pass the stem cell bill, so we are creating not only a compassionate kind of research that is going to go on and save people's lives and improve their quality of life, but that is creating jobs in a whole new sector of the economy that right now we are not doing exactly what we should be doing.

Then we also repeal the corporate welfare and we take the 13 or 14 billion and we are going to pump that into alternative energy, create a whole other sector for alternative energy sources.

So you put all this stuff together that we are able to do that, that is bold leadership. These are the kind of initiatives that we really need in the country, and Speaker PELOSI has provided us with that leadership.

So I hope in regards to health care, we get some bold tax credits. How about a bold program where all Americans are going to be covered and where we are going to put the money, instead of managed disease, prevent diseases from happening and investing in these young people so that they are healthy, educated and then create opportunity for us.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I think it is very important, Mr. RYAN, to really talk about many of the issues that are facing the right here, right now Congress, right here, right now. Not, well, what we would like to do pie-in-the-sky. Something realistic.

Mr. MURPHY, I can tell you that it is very important that when we look at the issue of Iraq, that we have a real discussion. The President is going in the opposite direction of the American people at this point. I mean, in November, that is what happened. The President is moving in this direction, the American people are going in the opposite direction. He could be going this way, they are going that way. I mean, it is just that simple.

I don't know who the advisers are in the White House or what have you, but when you have generals that have been in the field at the double digit numbers saying that we are headed in the wrong direction as it relates to the strategy that the administration has, you have Colin Powell. Goodness gracious, the Secretary of State, the former I guess two Joint Chiefs of Staff, the head of the military, to say an escalation in troops in a civil war is a wrong thing to do.

We have been saying in November and even now saying that the principal mission of our forces should be training of the Iraqi troops. Now, that is "we are going to start training."

Well, we have been saying that from the beginning. That is a strategy to re-deploy hopefully one day. Not "we will work it out sometime in the near future." The issue of the logistics and force protection and counterterrorism activities, those are the things that we should be involved in versus patrolling the streets of Baghdad. Patrolling the streets of Mosul. That should be the Iraqi force's responsibility right now.

The beginning of phase, to be able to re-deploy our troops, that has to happen. We have military bases, Mr. RYAN, we have been there. We have military bases that are the size of some U.S. cities in Iraq where troops can be trained, Iraqi troops can be trained, along with getting some of our allies to take part in that.

So for us to have what we talk about so much here on this floor, a bipartisan approach towards some of these major, major issues, we are going to have to move in that direction.

To try to make tax cuts permanent for the super wealthy, that is the opposite direction as it relates to being able to provide some sort of relief for the middle-class and small businesses in this country. We have already said, Mr. MURPHY, that we are going to operate in a pay-as-you-go atmosphere. What does that mean? Mr. RYAN, you know how over the years we have said we want to break this down, Mr. MURPHY, so that everyone can understand what we are talking about.

That means if you are going to pay for something, if you are going to spend money, then you have to show how you are going to pay for it. Not just saying a chicken in the pot for everyone. Well, how much does it cost? That is not important, because we will just ask our country, we will just ask Japan, China, the U.K., the Caribbean, Taiwan, Korea, Canada and Germany

and OPEC nations to pay that for us and we will just owe them. We don't have to pay it any time soon, but we will owe them. We will be indebted to countries even to countries that we have been with war with in the past.

□ 1545

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I appreciate that, because that is exactly what happens is you don't have the money, there was no pay-as-you-go in the last several Congresses, runaway spending, borrowing money from China. What does that mean? Well, here is our budget priorities for 2007 prior to Democrats taking office, budget into the billions of dollars. This red bar here is just interest on the money that we borrowed. This is not paying it down; this is just paying the interest on it. You know, you get your mortgage and you get your car loan and you open it up and you have got a 5 or \$600 payment. You see \$300 of it is actually going to the payment and the other stuff is interest, and it breaks your heart.

This is what the country is doing. But compare that to what we are doing, this is education, homeland security and veterans. This is going back to China; this is going back to some of those other countries.

And then you look and you see China says the test they did in space does not signal an intent to militarize space. You can't get the real facts on China's military budget, but they are buying a ton more ships. That is where that money is going.

I think it is important to make that point because it is not just money that just goes and floats out and the Federal Reserve tries to find it somewhere. It is going to China, it is going to the Middle East, it is going to OPEC countries.

And then we are funding both sides of the war on terror because we are buying all the oil, making them money. It gets back to the terrorists. And then we have a war in the Middle East and we pass almost \$500 billion already that we are spending from our side already on the war in Iraq.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I am going to yield to my friend from Connecticut here in one second. Great point. I am glad that you put a period at the end of that dot.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. That is why we are friends, stuff like that.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you, Mr. RYAN.

The real issue here is, gentlemen, even before I have an opportunity to get a copy of the President's speech, Mr. Speaker, and even before our great Sergeant at Arms stands there and says, Madam Speaker, for the first time in the history of the country, the President of the United States, even before that happens, I guarantee you, gentlemen, that this health care proposal that the President has is going to end up being to the American middle-class taxpayer, a person that wants health care, money out of this pocket,

taking money out of this pocket and putting it hopefully in the other, with some coming out to pay for it.

There will be no real program that will benefit the middle class in achieving health care. It would have to almost be, Mr. Speaker, an atmosphere to where for a person to get a true benefit, they would probably have to go out and get a tax attorney to understand their opportunities, their lucky-ducky opportunities that we hear so much about here on Capitol Hill.

I think it is important, Members, that we break this thing down before we leave Washington this week to make sure the American people know exactly the direction that the administration wants this Congress to move in, because there has to be a discussion. And it has to be open-ended, Mr. MURPHY. He needs to say, Listen, I have this health care initiative; I would love to have a discussion with the Congress on how we can make this possible for the American people.

Now, I can tell you right now, the superwealthy have an advocate in the administration in making their tax cuts permanent; I am talking about the superwealthy. I am talking about the folks who are not worried about if they are going to be able to get health care. They already have it.

We are talking about those 47 million Americans that are stuck right now, and the thousands of small businesses that once provided a level of health care; but let's not make it so technical so that only a few can benefit. Some of the earned income tax credits are not taken advantage of, Members, because when you are punching in and punching out every day and you have to go pick up your kids, and if you have got to take them to the doctor, you are making a career decision, that is the reason why the emergency room is so convenient because the boss person doesn't want to let that working parent or parents off to be able to take care of his health care needs.

So this is a huge issue. But at the same time, I think it is important, Members, that we keep in the frame here this issue of Iraq. It has to continue to surface; we have to deal with it; and the American people are counting on us to provide leadership.

I yield to the gentleman from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. I thank Mr. MEEK.

There are already reports that the words we may get tonight are going to give a little short shrift to the issue of Iraq. If the President wants to put forth a plan that is so unpopular that it is not backed by his own military leaders, it is not backed by our civilian foreign policy expert, it is not backed by the American public, well, then he should also have the courage to talk about it, to defend it, to put it before us. But knowing that it is unpopular, we may not hear too much about it tonight.

To get back to, Mr. MEEK, your point on health care, let us be honest about

what is going to be proposed tonight, how we are going to save money on health care. It is not by investing more in prevention; it is not by moving people out of emergency rooms and putting them into real programs and care. It is taking people who have good insurance and making their good insurance bad insurance. It is going out and taking folks who have had the great benefit of working for an employer that provides a comprehensive package of benefits, and it is becoming less and less likely these days that even good employers out there can afford to give a robust package of benefits.

What the President is going to propose today is that for families that have had the good fortune to find a good insurance plan, they are going to tax that employer. They are going to make it less likely that you are going to get good insurance anymore. So we are going to get a proposal today which is going to actually result in worse health care for a lot of families.

I guess the point here is that, you know, again, if we are going to listen to the words that come from this administration, we heard in last year's State of the Union that we need to confront the rising cost of care, strengthen the doctor/patient relationship and help people afford the insurance coverage we need, if we want to talk about that, then we need to do something about that. And how we do something about that is not by taking the haves and putting them into the column of the have-nots. It is by keeping the haves where they are on health care and taking the have-nots and giving them that same level of health care.

We can absolutely do that without adding cost to the system, because those have-nots, as Mr. RYAN said, end up getting care. They just end up getting the most expensive, the most unfortunate type of care, that being crisis care. We can do a better job on that.

And, Mr. MEEK, as you said, we can make sure that we continue to have that discussion on Iraq, which may be missing tonight.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. One of the issues, you know, the more you talk, the more you see how all this just really ties together. This is health care costs and tying in a way to the minimum wage. The average family health care premium in 2005 was \$10,880; and the salary of a full-time year-round minimum-wage worker was less than that, \$10,700. So you will work as a minimum-wage worker 40 hours a week for an entire year and not even be able to pay for your full health care bill.

Now, in the United States of America, there is something wrong with that. There is something wrong with the wage of the minimum-wage worker, and there is obviously something wrong with the cost of health care in the United States because of this kind of backward system that we now have that just basically treats diseases and is not focusing probably like it should in preventing a lot of these things from happening.

And I think the more we reach out through the SCHIP program to make sure that these families who are qualified for children's health care know that they are qualified, to get them signed up, because at the end of the day it is the right thing to do, it is the compassionate thing to do, but at the end of the day it is going to save everybody a lot more money, too.

If we can get these kids at a young age and make sure they are treated, evaluated, they know the direction that they are going in, they know the medical history of both parents so that they can be treated accordingly.

I appreciate what you are saying and I appreciate you bringing up the issue of health care.

I know we are running down here; the clock is ticking, Mr. MEEK. I would be happy to yield to you in order to get us down the road here of wrapping things up. I appreciate all the comments that have been made here, and I appreciate our young friend being here with us, who is probably older than me.

I yield to our fearless leader from Florida.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I think in light of bipartisanship, I know we split the hour, and I see my colleague on the Republican side is already here, in the light of bipartisanship, we will yield back our 10 minutes that we have left on our time to get off on a good note here.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, for any Members who want to, also to their constituents, if they want to look at some of these charts we have, www.speaker.gov/30something, get on the Web site, send us an e-mail at 30somethingdems@mail.house.gov, you will get a chance to look at all these charts.

I appreciate our friend from Connecticut joining us. I look forward to our President's speech tonight and hope it is inspiring and filled with good information and good public policy that we can work on in a bipartisan way.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

Mr. RYAN of Ohio (during the Special Order of Mr. MEEK of Florida). Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Democratic Caucus, I offer a privileged resolution (H. Res. 85) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 85

Resolved, That the following named Members be and are hereby elected to the following standing committees of the House of Representatives:

(1) COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES.—Mr. Wexler (to rank immediately after Mr. Donnelly).

(2) COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY.—Ms. Wasserman Schultz (to rank immediately after Mr. Davis of Alabama).

(3) COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.—Mr. Kanjorski (to rank immediately after Mr. McNerney), Ms. Hooley (to rank immediately after Mr. Kanjorski).

(4) COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS.—Ms. Millender-McDonald, Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Shuler, Mr. Gonzalez, Mr. Larsen of Washington, Mr. Grijalva, Mr. Michaud, Ms. Bean, Mr. Cuellar, Mr. Lipinski, Ms. Moore of Wisconsin, Mr. Altmire, Mr. Braley of Iowa, Ms. Clarke, Mr. Ellsworth, Mr. Johnson of Georgia, Mr. Sestak.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H. RES. 78, PERMITTING DELEGATES AND THE RESIDENT COMMISSIONER TO CAST VOTES IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Ms. SLAUGHTER (during the Special Order of Mr. MEEK of Florida), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110-3) on the resolution (H. Res. 86) providing for consideration of the resolution (H. Res. 78) amending the Rules of the House of Representatives to permit Delegates and the Resident Commissioner to the Congress to cast votes in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPUBLICAN PERSPECTIVE ON 110TH CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentlemen for yielding their time back and doing it in the spirit of bipartisanship.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that now that the 100 hours is out of the way and we are to the point of having the State of the Union, that we will see this body return to a format of regular order and regular process and rules that we have had in place and have respected and this body has abided by through the course of this great Nation. That would, indeed, be welcomed.

In the 100-hour agenda we have seen the majority party take action on some of the issues that they had chosen to address. Their 100-hour agenda has included legislation on student loans that really is not going to do anything to make loans more accessible and available to those students that are trying to get into college. It is not going to reduce the cost of college while it is there. And it will take effect

after a person has graduated and then is working and is looking at consolidating those loans and paying them back.

So that one was a little bit of a head-scratcher for a lot of our constituents because we have worked tirelessly to make college more affordable, to raise the caps on what could be loaned for students to get those Stafford loans, Pell Grants and increasing the funding for those, things that actually would make a difference, and that is an accomplishment of the Republican majority over the past decade.

Minimum wage. One of our colleagues had just mentioned minimum wage. And I will point out, Mr. Speaker, to the Members of this body that the actions that were taken on minimum wage, we heard from our small business community. Certainly small business employers that are in my district were very concerned about this. We have heard estimates of 5 to 7 to as much as \$17 billion in costs that this would be to our small businesses. That is of tremendous concern. That is a cost that is going to get passed on.

□ 1600

That is a cost that is going to get passed on. And of course in the minimum wage bill, we had the unfortunate error of Tunagate that was crept into that bill somehow in one of the sessions as the bill was being drafted, and there again, not going through regular order in making its way to the House. And we hope that we will see that situation addressed.

And the tuna producers that American Samoa were exempted from that, American Samoa was exempted from that minimum wage. That is not fair to the rest of the tuna producers in this country. It is not fair to the rest of the companies that sell tuna and tuna products, and we do hope that there will be attention placed to that and that issue will be addressed, because it was a northern California, San Francisco, company that produced the tuna that is harvested in American Samoa. We do have concerns about favoritism that was shown there.

The Medicare bill that was passed in the first 100 hours will indeed yield additional costs to the VA. We have had some numbers there that are of quite concern, as much as three-quarters of a billion dollars that this would end up costing, be an additional cost to the veterans health care system, to our veterans for their pharmaceuticals.

And what we have heard from our seniors is that they are pleased with Medicare part D. They are pleased to have access to affordable health care. They are very pleased that prescriptions and pharmaceuticals and therapies that at one point they did not have, that they now have access to that.

It was a little bit of a head-scratcher, Mr. Speaker, that a program that has been so well received by our seniors, that the new majority would come

along and say, well, we are going to change it. We are going to tweak it. It does not matter if it is working well.

And it leads us to question: Is it just they want programs that only they design and only they grow, or do they want programs that are going to be of service to the American people?

Another of the bills that came through was the 9/11 Commission implementation, not exactly what had been promised in campaign promises. But, you know, the new majority did take the bill up and did take action. And we have heard from a lot of our businesses that are in logistics and transportation with great concerns, great concerns about the cost.

Mr. Speaker, when you pass additional fees and additional mandates, and additional costs on to business, guess what? Ronald Reagan was right. It is the people that end up paying those costs. It is not businesses that are bearing those costs and absorbing them. They get passed on to you, to me, and to other consumers, the taxpayers, who see their costs go up because the business that they are doing business with is having to meet the mandates of who? Guess what? The mandates of the Federal Government.

So, yes, this has been a very expensive first 100 hours. And it has been troublesome in that regular order was not abided by, the bills were not going through committees and having hearings and having the due diligence process that we as Members of Congress are bound to do. And then they were just coming to the floor without those hearings.

I just had another of our colleagues mention something on health care. Of course, this is an issue that we know the President is going to speak a little bit about this evening. Before we move on to a couple of other points, I do want to make a couple of observations about health care and some of the discussion that was taking place on the issue of health care.

We know the President is going to talk about health care tonight. Now, the Republicans, the conservatives, have an approach that they think is a right approach. We think that it is appropriate for small businesses to be able to band together and come together under an umbrella and purchase health care, health coverage, health insurance for their employees.

That is very good. Our Nation has 40 million uninsured, and to be able to have groups come together, small businesses, let us say all of your florists, or all of your auto supply companies, or all of your plumbing companies, or companies that are a part of the Chamber of Commerce or other small business organizations, or women-owned businesses, businesses of like groups can come together and make that purchase of insurance.

It is called small business health plans or association health plans, very good idea for helping our Nation's 40 million uninsured, and the right type,

the right type step because it helps make health care insurance affordable.

Mr. Speaker, that is positive. That is a free-market way to address the situation. It is a pro-small-business way to address the situation. It is the right step.

Another good step is allowing a tax deduction, \$5,000, \$7,500, for small business that buy insurance. That is the great step. That is the way it should be. You know, when you start looking at the end of the year and filling out your taxes, that is money that you have earned, and being able to take that deduction because you have done something that is right, way to go.

It should be incentivized. There should be deductions for that. And it is appropriate that that take place. Now, those are private sector, free market responses to addressing the health care situation. They work very well with the health savings accounts that were passed as part of the Medicare modernization when that bill came forward in 2003.

Health savings accounts have been tremendously popular. We now know that we have about 15 million Americans that are insured through health savings accounts. The number is growing. By 2010 we know that there will be over 20 million American families that are there and insured through health savings accounts, having the opportunity to take responsibility for their health care from dollar one.

And continuing to incentivize health savings accounts, tax deductions there. There again, it is a private sector, free-enterprise solution to the health care situation, more market-driven, allowing people to have control of access, to take control of their health care decisions, and to participate in those, have choice over who their physician is. Those are the right things to do.

Now, one of my colleagues just made a statement about the haves and the have-nots in health care, and made a statement that health care could be provided and, I think I am quoting this correctly, said: We could do it without any additional cost to the system.

Oh, Mr. Speaker, let me tell you, when I hear things like that, without any additional cost to the system, it certainly causes me to pay a little bit closer attention, because one of the things that we have realized, Mr. Speaker, is you know what? Nothing is free. There is nothing free. Nothing. There is no free lunch. There is nothing free in health care. Somebody is paying the bill.

What we see take place many times is cost shifting, and you will see costs shift within a system. Now, in my wonderful State of Tennessee, we have had an interesting situation take place. We have had a program that went into place in January 1, 1995. It is called TENNCARE, and it was basically a template for HILLARY CLINTON's health care plan. And one of the talking points on it was: There will be no additional costs. We will just spread out

the risk. We will allow those who are uninsured, up to so many percent of poverty, 400 percent of poverty, to come in and to access health care, and we will spread the risk. We will do it through managed care organizations. And managed care organizations can compete for the opportunity to provide this insurance.

Well, it has been a program that has had quite a bit of turmoil. We now see that nearly 30 percent of the individuals in our State are on the program, and it is eating up about 36 percent of our State's budget.

The reason for that, Mr. Speaker, is because whenever you are trying to give things for free, someone else is paying. In the case of TENNCARE, it has been the citizens of our State, the taxpayers of our State. And there is no way to ever keep up with the exponential growth of that program. So I would encourage all of my colleagues to be very, very thoughtful as we move forward on the health care debate.

There is no such thing as being free. There is no way to do this with no additional cost, because, as you try to make more things free, what happens is your access is restricted. What happens is you have fewer physicians who are available for those individuals that need those services. What have you when things are free is people flood into that State trying to get that for a reduced fee, and your own citizens of the State who need the program many times are not able to access it.

So I would step very cautiously as our colleagues on the other side of the aisle talk about health care that is going to be free, and universal health care and HILLARY CLINTON's health care plan. There are some pitfalls that are there, and they deserve to be recognized by the body of this House.

As we talk about health care, I would love to yield to the gentleman from Georgia, Dr. PRICE, a distinguished Member of this body who is an expert on health care, for some of his thoughts on the issues of the day.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding. I want to thank you for your leadership and your organization of this hour, and day in and day out of working here in the Congress to represent your constituents in Tennessee, but working so diligently on behalf of the hardworking American taxpayer out there, making certain that their interests are upheld here in the House of Representatives.

I appreciate you bringing up the issue of health care. There are a couple of things that I would be interested in talking about today. But the issue of health care is near and dear to my heart. As you mentioned, I am a physician, or was in my former life before coming to Congress, spent over 20 years in the private practice of orthopedic surgery outside Atlanta.

One thing that I knew for certain and that my patients knew for certain was that when doctors and patients are able to make health care decisions,

then good decisions get made. When insurance companies or government inserts themselves into those decisions, then most often, most often those decisions do not resemble the kind of decisions that individual persons would make in very personal health care decisions that they have.

I appreciate the comments that you made. I would like to commend the President for putting on the table what I believe will be discussed tonight in his State of the Union; that is, the individual tax deductibility of health insurance. I have been a longtime supporter of the right of individuals to have the same kind of benefit that employers do in the purchase of health insurance.

So I am pleased that we have heard that that is indeed going to be a possibility brought forward by the President this evening. It would give so many people an opportunity to purchase health insurance that right now are not able to do so financially. So I look forward to that proposal coming forward tonight. And I would be happy to yield back to the gentlewoman and talk about some other issues if you so desire.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. Before I yield back to him for some further comments, I just want to highlight one of the things that he brought up as a physician, and someone who deals with this.

When you have a government-run program, what you are doing is putting bureaucrats in charge of your health care decisions, and you are removing that doctor-patient relationship many times. You are putting a barrier there between the individual and that doctor. Someone else that is removed from the process is making that decision; thereby it removes the patient many times from that decision process.

□ 1615

That is something that we do not want to see this Nation run toward. Our seniors, our families want to be able to participate in making those health care decisions for themselves. We are so pleased to know that the President will talk about, as I said earlier, the private sector free market-based approach to solving our health care problem.

Mr. Speaker, that is what it is going to require, innovation, thinking outside of the box and being certain of something we know: access, affordability, and preserving that doctor-patient relationship.

In my case, preserving health care for Tennesseans. In the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE), preserving health care for Georgians. That is where our focus will be as we move forward on this discussion. We do not want a government-run, government-directed program that is going to place barriers between patients and the individuals that are making those decisions with their health care professionals.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Sometimes it is hard to get your arms around what do you mean the government being involved in the process.

I would suggest to my colleagues here and others who are listening that we already see the inroads of some government decisions. One of them is what sounded wonderful at the time, the HIPAA legislation, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, which was supposed to make every individual citizen in this Nation make their health records more secure and private. In fact, what that bill has done is make that information less private and more available to more individuals than ever before. That is because, as you well know when you go in to see your doctor, the first thing you have to do is sign a ream of documents. You feel like you are in a lawyer's office. You sign a ream of documents.

What you are doing when you sign those documents is providing so that the physician, when he or she shares your medical information with anybody, isn't liable for violating HIPAA. Medicine is a collegial activity. It requires that Dr. A communicate with Dr. B who communicates with Dr. C, and they get together and come up with the best solution for anybody's health problem.

When you are not able to share that information, the quality of health care goes down. What has happened because the government had this brilliant idea to get involved in the process is to say we will make it so that your information cannot be shared with anybody unless you give your permission. So because Dr. Smith doesn't know when he or she is going to run into Dr. Jones to discuss that case, it is imperative that every single patient sign away their right to any privacy so the doctor can communicate when that time arises.

What the government has done by putting these rules in place, which sounded wonderful, but what the government has done is made it so every single patient in this Nation, their medical information is less private and less secure than it was before governmental intervention.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman for bringing that forward. The unintended consequences are many times what is so difficult to deal with. In theory to bureaucrats sitting in buildings, that sounded like a great deal: let's have everybody sign the forms.

In practice what happened for physicians, it was additional paperwork, additional staff, and removing the patient from the process, making it longer before they get a definitive diagnosis and know how to begin a protocol and treatment that will restore their health, things that impede a quality of life that our constituents desire.

So those unintended consequences many times get in the way. We are just very hopeful that we will continue the focus and that the Democrats will join

us in wanting a private sector, free-market solution to health care and not a government-run bureaucracy.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. If the gentlewoman would yield, I appreciate that description of a free market private system health care. I call it patient centered when I am talking about private because it means that patients are empowered to do what they feel is appropriate in their instance.

When you have a medical problem or when somebody else has a medical problem, their decision about what they want to do to treat that may not be what mine would be or my family's would be. It is only when individuals get to make those personal decisions that we are able to make certain that patient-centered health care exists.

When we try to describe what the future may be if our friends on the other side of the aisle had their way and put in place a government system that they tried to do in the early 1990s, all you have to do is think about the last time you were at your doctor's and you needed a test or an X-ray or some type of procedure done. Well, it is very likely that discussion and education that you got as a patient with your physician didn't last terribly long and you came to an understanding and agreement about what would happen next.

What you may not have known what happens next is one of those employees in that office then gets on the phone and talks to the insurance company to make certain that it is okay. Most often we have gotten that process down to be relatively streamlined. But can you imagine if we put the government in charge of health care and you had to get on the phone and get the government's permission, Washington's permission, so you could have an MRI or biopsy or some other procedure? That is what is looming.

The problem is now just time and inconvenience. The problem is that if you, in order to have that happen and to be effective from the government, from Washington's viewpoint, if you were not to follow those rules, there would be significant punishment. In fact, you would violate the law.

So what we saw in the early 1990s in the proposal that was put on the table, if you as a patient or a physician were to do something that wasn't allowed by the government, that would be a crime. It wouldn't just be a bad decision; it would be a crime.

So what our friends on the other side of the aisle are in fact proposing in the small print, and I know they like bumper-sticker politics, I know they like to give these glorious titles to things, and they sound wonderful, but when you get down to the fine print, what you see, especially in the area of health care that I feel so passionately about, when you get down to the fine print, what it means is that patients and doctors will be exposed to criminal violations if they don't follow what Washington says they ought to do. That concerns me very, very greatly; and I know it does you.

I yield back.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. It does indeed. I thank the gentleman for yielding back.

Having this process that gets more and more convoluted every single day is of such concern to our constituents who just want to be able to go to the doctor, have a relationship with the doctor and know a little bit about what to expect.

As I said earlier, not knowing what to expect has been one of the interesting points that we have dealt with in this first 100 hours. I think that we all have been a little bit concerned about a bill that was brought forward on Friday. I know my constituents asked about it as they heard about it over the weekend. We talked about it on the floor some this morning, and this is allowing the Delegates voting rights.

I have had constituents say, well now, wouldn't that require an amendment to the Constitution? They remember when this debate took place at different times through history back in the 1970s and again in the early 1990s when there were those that wanted to give voting rights to our territories. They are very, very concerned about this, and rightfully so.

This morning on the floor earlier I quoted a comment that was made by the Democrat Speaker of the House in 1970, Tom Foley, who said: "It is very clear that a constitutional amendment would be required to give Delegates a vote in the Committee of the Whole or in the full House." That was taken from a New York Times editorial.

Now, this is something that we have to realize, we hold our Constitution and the orderly process and the rule of law that is laid forth in that Constitution, we hold that to be meaningful. We recognize the necessity, Mr. Speaker, to respect the Constitution of this great land. We respect that it is built on one man, one vote and equal representation under the law.

So when we hear about giving the residents of our territories a vote, it is of concern to us and it does raise several succinct points that we have discussed on the floor today. It is a point worthy of discussion because it appears that since this has not gone through regular order and through the committee process, we haven't held hearings, this is nothing more than an unconstitutional power grab in order to try to move the new majority's agenda. It is of tremendous concern.

I yield to the gentleman from Georgia for some comments on the issue.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding and her leadership on this issue.

The issue we are talking about is House Resolution 78, H. Res. 78. As the gentlewoman mentioned, it was just brought up as a possibility that we would be voting on it this week this past Friday. I would venture to say, Mr. Speaker, that in your race and I know in my race and I doubt in anybody's race around this Nation, save

possibly the elections in the territories, did anyone ever address the issue of Delegates voting on the floor of the House of Representatives. I can honestly say I don't know of anybody who used that as an issue that they ran on in November.

We all appreciate that the American people were interested in change when they voted in November, but I'm with you: I don't think that the American people were interested in this kind of change, this kind of change that I believe to be unconstitutional.

When I go to schools, middle schools and high schools, around my district and I talk to students and we talk about the process of government, oftentimes I will ask them a question: Can we make any law we want in the House of Representatives? Can we make any law in Congress we want?

Sometimes you will get some folks that say yeah; but most often the young men and women and boys and girls in my district and I know across this Nation know and understand and appreciate that the guiding principles that we follow here are defined in the Constitution. I know that it is challenging sometimes for people to be held to make certain that they follow the Constitution, because there are some really stiff rules in this Constitution.

But one of the ones at the very beginning, article I, is about the legislative branches, as you well know, Mr. Speaker, and I believe article I was about the legislative branch because the Founders knew the incredible importance of the representative branch of government, the legislative branch of government. And section 1 is about all powers being vested in the House and Senate. Article I, section 2 states: "The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second year by the people of the several States."

It didn't mention anything about territories, Delegates from territories. I am so pleased, and we are really aided by the representation in the committees by the Delegates from the territories, by the Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico, by the Delegates from Guam, the Virgin Islands and American Samoa, and by the Delegate from the District of Columbia, but clearly they do not represent States.

In this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, when we gather as a Committee of the Whole or as the House of Representatives, it is clear that the Founders and that our Constitution states that an individual to vote in that instance must be a Member of the House and a representative of the State.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, repeating again from the Constitution that the representatives of this body are popularly elected from the several States, and that is so important, and I want to talk for just a moment about the size of our districts.

Mine is right around 700,000 people. We have some that I think are as low as 640,000, 650,000. They are going to vary just a little bit. But that is the size of them.

We do appreciate so much the guidance that is given by the Delegates from the territories. They are a valuable participation and a valuable addition and a wonderful and treasured resource of this body. We need their opinion and their input. But the Constitution does not allow for their having a vote.

I think in Guam we have about 155,000 people, and in American Samoa there are about 57,000 people.

□ 1630

So we look at one man, one vote and the equal representation, and then we have to say, my goodness, that is just really a far smaller number. That is the size of many of our towns or our counties that we represent when you have a district like mine. So I think that it is important for us to realize that.

And it is important for us also to realize that these are Delegates that will be able to vote to raise your taxes, but they are not paying those Federal income taxes, and that is of tremendous concern to our constituents.

Mr. Speaker, we have dubbed this time and again the "hold on to your wallet Congress" because it seems as if they are looking for ways to increase the cost of government and increase the size of that bureaucracy. And our concern is that this is another of those ways that would make it easier to raise your taxes.

And I yield back to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I thank you so much for yielding. And I appreciate your bringing up that point because it is so important and really so basic to our Nation.

Our Nation began for a variety of reasons, but not the least of which is that our Founding Fathers believed that they were being taxed without any ability to have representation in the body that was deciding whether or not to tax them. They had taxation without representation.

Well, this is really turning it on its head because, as you mentioned, the individuals, the people in American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, wonderful people that they are, but they are not obligated to pay any Federal income tax. None. So what we would be doing would be allowing Members, individuals in this House of Representatives who would be described as Members, to vote on whether or not to raise income taxes, but not be affected personally and not have the people that they represent be affected. So that would be representation without taxation. And I simply believe and I think that our constituents believe across this Nation that that is fundamentally wrong. Fundamentally wrong.

And I want to get back for just a moment to the issue of one person/one vote, because when people say, well, it does not make a whole lot of difference if the districts are a little bit different

size. What difference does that make? But, again, our Founders knew and understood wisely that every Member of this House of Representatives ought to represent essentially the same number of people so that when individuals at home, citizens at home, vote for their representative, their vote counts basically the same as every other citizen of this Nation. And when you have districts that are one-tenth the size of other districts, which, as you mentioned, American Samoa has a population of about 57,000, 58,000, and most of our districts are around 650,000; so that means that every person in American Samoa who votes, their vote counts 10 times, 10 times the amount that your vote and my vote and every other American citizen's vote counts. And that, Mr. Speaker, and ladies and gentlemen, and colleagues of the House of Representatives, one, is not fair; and, two, it is not the way our Founders envisioned anybody voting in this House of Representatives.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman.

And one of the things that we have our focus on as we prepare for the State of the Union tonight and for the work that is before us for the rest of this Congress is certainly making certain that we are successful in our efforts in Iraq and making certain that we are successful in the war on terror.

Mr. Speaker, our constituents know that this has been a long war. They know that the terrorists started attacking us over two decades ago, and they also know that on September 11 this Nation decided we were no longer going to respond to terrorist attacks as civil disobedience. What we were going to do was to change course, and we were going to respond to it as what it is: an act of war. And our constituents all know, especially constituents in my district, National Guard families, Reserve families, families at Fort Campbell that are in our district, they know that this is a very, very difficult time for our Nation, and it is a difficult time for our men and women in uniform. And they know that freedom is worth protecting.

And when I talk to those men and women, many who have been deployed in Afghanistan, have done two deployments in Iraq and know that they may be going back, they will say, Yes, we are going back because our job is not done. And they understand it, Mr. Speaker. And they know that we take a step forward and then we take a step or two back, and that it comes very slowly, and that progress is very slow.

We have seen, and our colleague JOHN SHADEGG had handed me an article from Real Clear Politics that pointed out some things that have been happening recently that just haven't caught the eye of the media, and I wish that they had because I would like for them to catch the eye of the American people.

First of all, there appears to be some retreating by al Qaeda from Baghdad

because they know that troop levels are returning to where they were during the electoral process that took place in January of last year in Iraq. They know that the radical cleric, al Sadr, has decided to call off his boycott, and that his people are returning to participate in that newly formed Parliament, and they know that he is lowering his profile. And they also have seen Prime Minister al Maliki begin to take a change of course and to put some distance between himself and al Sadr. But this is of tremendous concern to us when we hear the naysayers talk about cutting funding and not supporting the troops.

And this morning I was on the floor speaking about our colleague SAM JOHNSON, who truly is a hero and has a wonderful piece of legislation that steps forward. It is House Resolution 511, and it really pushes forward on the idea of supporting our troops and funding these men and women who are in harm's way, making certain that they have what they need to do the job that is in front of them; sending the message to them that we stand with them and we are not going to desert them.

We know that this is difficult work. We know that it is a job, as I said, that is slow; that progress is slow. But, Mr. Speaker, as we stand here today preparing for the State of the Union, and as we expect to hear this evening from our Commander in Chief that the state of the Union is indeed strong, we also want these men and women in uniform to know that it is strong because of the work they do.

We have the ability to stand here every day and talk about freedom and defend freedom and talk about having a Nation that is so wonderful and so diverse that we all, each and every one of us, can pursue our dreams, can focus on hope and opportunity that is so important to us. We do that because men and women have put their life on the line, many times more than once, many times for days on end, to be certain that freedom remains. And we feel that it is appropriate to bring forward a resolution that says fund the troops and fund their needs.

We think that it is important that we move forward letting the men and women know that, when they are in the field, we are listening to them. We are listening to the troops. We are listening to the commanders, and we respect their judgment. That is an important message for us to send.

And I yield to the gentleman from Georgia for his comments.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding. And it is so important. And I appreciate your bringing up Congressman JOHNSON's resolution. I spoke for a brief moment on the floor earlier about that as well.

And I know that in this Chamber we can disagree about a lot of things, and we should. Our system works best when ideas are exchanged and the best solutions rise to the top, because it really

is a battle of ideas. But in this instance we can disagree, as I mentioned, about many things, but we ought not disagree about whether or not our men and women in harm's way, our troops who are defending liberty truly around the globe, ought to receive every single resource that they need in order to defend themselves and to defend us.

I know that many folks go to Walter Reed and visit some of those brave men and women who have been injured in battle. I have had the opportunity to do that, and I was struck always by every conversation that I had with some of those men and women who have come back, some with devastating injuries, truly. And I am just so humbled by those conversations that I have with those brave soldiers and warriors because I would try to close every conversation and ask them what it was that we could do to help. What can I do to help? And virtually every single one of them said without fail, Congressman, if you can do one thing, if you can do just one thing, please, please let me get back to my unit. And that kind of enthusiasm, that kind of commitment, that kind of sense of duty and honor and patriotism is chilling. It really is.

There are incredible stories that each of them tell, but also I believe those men and women serve as a guidepost for us. And, in fact, we ought to look to them and look to their courage to have the courage that we need in order to support our men and women who are in harm's way.

And I am very hopeful that this House of Representatives will support Congressman JOHNSON's resolution because it truly speaks for, I believe, the vast majority of the American people who want to make certain that, regardless of how you feel about this conflict, we as a Congress state clearly that we will make certain that we provide all of the resources necessary for our men and women in harm's way.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman.

I will close our hour by referencing some comments I have had from some veterans in my district. I love the fact that I have absolutely wonderful veterans who participate with me on these issues in our National Security Coalition, in our Veterans Coalition, which are advisory groups for me. And I have had great discussions with them and have sent them information about the new strategy going forward in Iraq, about some of the conversations that have been taking place here, and have sought their best judgment, men and women who have worn the uniform and have been there and who have fought and seeking their best judgment. And a couple of their comments, I think, are so incredibly significant.

One of them says: "We have to continue our push forward and let our military make the decisions in this war. When the House and Senate changed, there was no doubt there would be a change of efforts. Our

enemy knows this and will continue to strike as long as they think our country is not united."

And another of the veterans said in this e-mail: "What is important is that we show a unified front to the enemy and we give the new plan and the deployment a chance to work. If we win, if we defeat radical Islam, then maybe, maybe, this is all going to be worth it."

Mr. Speaker, these men and women who have put that uniform on and have gone into battle know that this is the price that we pay. They understand that this is not going to be easy. They know, and they are watching the President's speech tonight, and they are watching our response. And I would submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that our enemy is watching our response. And I will submit to you that, while we all have different philosophies, we all come from different districts, and we are a very diverse body, I would commend to you and my colleagues that it is important that we stand with our men and women in uniform, that we show a unified front and show that we are committed to being certain that this Nation continues to stand as a great Nation and that we persevere.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LYNCH). Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 8:40 p.m. for the purpose of receiving in joint session the President of the United States.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 45 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 8:40 p.m.

□ 2041

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order at 8 o'clock and 41 minutes p.m.

JOINT SESSION OF THE HOUSE AND SENATE HELD PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 38 TO HEAR AN ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The Speaker of the House presided.

The Deputy Sergeant at Arms, Mrs. Kerri Hanley, announced the Vice President and Members of the U.S. Senate, who entered the Hall of the House of Representatives, the Vice President taking the chair at the right of the Speaker, and the Members of the Senate the seats reserved for them.

The SPEAKER. The Chair appoints as members of the committee on the part of the House to escort the President of the United States into the Chamber:

The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER);

The gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN);

The gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL);

The gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON);

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER);

The gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT);

The gentleman from Florida (Mr. PUTNAM); and

The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MCCOTTER).

The VICE PRESIDENT. The President of the Senate, at the direction of that body, appoints the following Senators as members of the committee on the part of the Senate to escort the President of the United States into the House Chamber:

The Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID); The Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN);

The Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER);

The Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY);

The Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN);

The Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW);

The Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL);

The Senator from Mississippi (Mr. LOTT);

The Senator from Arizona (Mr. KYL); The Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN);

The Senator from Texas (Mrs. HUTCHISON);

The Senator from Nevada (Mr. ENSIGN); and

The Senator from Alaska (Mr. STEVENS).

The Deputy Sergeant at Arms announced the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, His Excellency Roble Olhaye, Ambassador from the Republic of Djibouti.

The Dean of the Diplomatic Corps entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seat reserved for him.

The Deputy Sergeant at Arms announced the Chief Justice of the United States and the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court.

The Chief Justice of the United States and the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seats reserved for them in front of the Speaker's rostrum.

The Deputy Sergeant at Arms announced the Cabinet of the President of the United States.

The members of the Cabinet of the President of the United States entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seats reserved for them in front of the Speaker's rostrum.

At 9 o'clock and 7 minutes p.m., the Sergeant at Arms, the Honorable Wilson Livingood, announced the President of the United States.

The President of the United States, escorted by the committee of Senators

and Representatives, entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and stood at the Clerk's desk.

(Applause, the Members rising.)

The SPEAKER. Members of the Congress, I have the high privilege and the distinct honor of presenting to you the President of the United States.

(Applause, the Members rising.)

THE STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The PRESIDENT. Thank you very much. Tonight, I have a high privilege and distinct honor of my own—as the first President to begin the State of the Union message with these words: Madam Speaker.

In his day, the late Congressman Thomas D'Alesandro, Jr., from Baltimore, Maryland, saw Presidents Roosevelt and Truman at this rostrum. But nothing could compare with the sight of his only daughter, Nancy, presiding tonight as Speaker of the House of Representatives. Congratulations, Madam Speaker.

Two Members of the House and Senate are not with us tonight, and we pray for the recovery and speedy return of Senator Tim Johnson and Congressman Charlie Norwood.

Madam Speaker, Vice President Cheney, Members of Congress, distinguished guests, and fellow citizens:

This rite of custom brings us together at a defining hour, when decisions are hard and courage is tested. We enter the year 2007 with large endeavors under way, and others that are ours to begin. In all of this, much is asked of us. We must have the will to face difficult challenges and determined enemies, and the wisdom to face them together.

Some in this Chamber are new to the House and Senate, and I congratulate the Democratic majority. Congress has changed, but our responsibilities have not. Each of us is guided by our own convictions, and to these we must stay faithful. Yet we are all held to the same standards and called to serve the same good purposes: to extend the Nation's prosperity, to spend the people's money wisely, to solve problems, not leave them to future generations, to guard America against all evil, and to keep faith with those we have sent forth to defend us.

We are not the first to come here with government divided and uncertainty in the air. Like many before us, we can work through our differences and achieve big things for the American people. Our citizens don't much care which side of the aisle we sit on, as long as we are willing to cross that aisle when there is work to be done. Our job is to make life better for our fellow Americans and help them to build a future of hope and opportunity, and this is the business before us tonight.

A future of hope and opportunity begins with a growing economy, and that

is what we have. We are now in the 41st month of uninterrupted job growth, in a recovery that has created 7.2 million new jobs, so far. Unemployment is low, inflation is low, and wages are rising. The economy is on the move, and our job is to keep it that way, not with more government but with more enterprise.

Next week, I will deliver a full report on the state of our economy. Tonight, I want to discuss three economic reforms that deserve to be priorities for this Congress.

First, we must balance the Federal budget. We can do so without raising taxes. What we need to do is impose spending discipline in Washington, D.C. We set a goal of cutting the deficit in half by 2009, and met that goal 3 years ahead of schedule. Now let us take the next step. In the coming weeks, I will submit a budget that eliminates the Federal deficit within the next 5 years. I ask you to make the same commitment. Together, we can restrain the spending appetite of the Federal Government and balance the Federal budget.

Next, there is the matter of earmarks. These special interest items are often slipped into bills at the last hour, when not even C-SPAN is watching. In 2005 alone, the number of earmarks grew to over 13,000 and totaled nearly \$18 billion. Even worse, over 90 percent of earmarks never make it to the floor of the House and Senate. They are dropped into committee reports that are not even part of the bill that arrives on my desk. You did not vote them into law. I did not sign them into law. Yet they are treated as if they have the force of law. The time has come to end this practice. So let us work together to reform the budget process, expose every earmark to the light of day and to a vote in Congress, and cut the number and cost of earmarks at least in half by the end of this session.

Finally, to keep this economy strong we must take on the challenge of entitlements. Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid are commitments of conscience, and so it is our duty to keep them permanently sound. Yet we are failing in that duty, and this failure will one day leave our children with three bad options: huge tax increases, huge deficits, or huge and immediate cuts in benefits. Everyone in this Chamber knows this to be true, yet somehow we have not found it in ourselves to act. So let us work together and do it now. With enough good sense and good will, you and I can fix Medicare and Medicaid, and save Social Security.

Spreading opportunity and hope in America also requires public schools that give children the knowledge and character they need in life. Five years ago, we rose above partisan differences to pass the No Child Left Behind Act, preserving local control, raising standards, and holding those schools accountable for results. And because we

acted, students are performing better in reading and math, and minority students are closing the achievement gap.

Now the task is to build on this success, without watering down standards, without taking control from local communities, and without backsliding and calling it reform. We can lift student achievement even higher by giving local leaders flexibility to turn around failing schools, and by giving families with children stuck in failing schools the right to choose someplace better. We must increase funds for students who struggle, and make sure these children get the special help they need. And we can make sure our children are prepared for the jobs of the future, and our country is more competitive, by strengthening math and science skills. The No Child Left Behind Act has worked for America's children, and I ask Congress to reauthorize this good law.

A future of hope and opportunity requires that all our citizens have affordable and available health care. When it comes to health care, government has an obligation to care for the elderly, the disabled, and poor children, and we will meet those responsibilities. For all other Americans, private health care insurance is the best way to meet their needs. But many Americans cannot afford a health insurance policy.

So tonight, I propose two new initiatives to help more Americans afford their own insurance. First, I propose a standard tax deduction for health insurance that will be like the standard tax deduction for dependents. Families with health insurance will pay no income or payroll taxes on \$15,000 of their income. Single Americans with health insurance will pay no income or payroll taxes on \$7,500 of their income. With this reform, more than 100 million men, women, and children who are now covered by employer-provided insurance will benefit from lower tax bills.

At the same time, this reform will level the playing field for those who do not get health insurance through their job. For Americans who now purchase health insurance on their own, this proposal would mean a substantial tax savings, \$4,500 for a family of four making \$60,000 a year. And for the millions of other Americans who have no health insurance at all, this deduction would help put a basic private health insurance plan within their reach. Changing the Tax Code is a vital and necessary step to making health care affordable for more Americans.

My second proposal is to help the States that are coming up with innovative ways to cover the uninsured. States that make basic private health insurance available to all their citizens should receive Federal funds to help them provide this coverage to the poor and the sick. I have asked the Secretary of Health and Human Services to work with Congress to take existing Federal funds and use them to create "Affordable Choices" grants. These

grants would give our Nation's Governors more money and more flexibility to get private health insurance to those most in need.

There are many other ways that Congress can help. We need to expand health savings accounts. We need to help small businesses through association health plans, we need to reduce costs and medical errors with better information technology. We will encourage price transparency, and to protect good doctors from junk lawsuits we need to pass medical liability reform. And in all we do, we must remember that the best health care decisions are made not by government and insurance companies, but by patients and their doctors.

Extending hope and opportunity in our country requires an immigration system worthy of America, with laws that are fair and borders that are secure. When laws and borders are routinely violated, this harms the interests of our country. To secure our border, we are doubling the size of the Border Patrol, and funding new infrastructure and technology.

Yet even with all these steps, we cannot fully secure the border unless we take pressure off the border, and that requires a temporary worker program. We should establish a legal and orderly path for foreign workers to enter our country to work on a temporary basis. As a result, they won't have to try to sneak in, and that will leave border agents free to chase down drug smugglers and criminals and terrorists. We will enforce our immigration laws at the work site, and give employers the tools to verify the legal status of their workers, so there is no excuse left for violating the law. We need to uphold the great tradition of the melting pot that welcomes and assimilates new arrivals. We need to resolve the status of illegal immigrants who are already in our country, without animosity and without amnesty.

Convictions run deep in this Capitol when it comes to immigration. Let us have a serious, civil, and conclusive debate, so that you can pass, and I can sign, comprehensive immigration reform into law.

Extending hope and opportunity depends on a stable supply of energy that keeps America's economy running and America's environment clean. For too long our Nation has been dependent on foreign oil, and this dependence leaves us more vulnerable to hostile regimes, and to terrorists, who could cause huge disruptions of oil shipments, and raise the price of oil, and do great harm to our economy.

It is in our vital interest to diversify America's energy supply, and the way forward is through technology. We must continue changing the way America generates electric power, by even greater use of clean coal technology, solar and wind energy, and clean, safe nuclear power. We need to press on with battery research for plug-in and hybrid vehicles and expand the use of

clean diesel vehicles and biodiesel fuel. We must continue investing in new methods of producing ethanol, using everything from wood chips, to grasses, to agricultural wastes.

We have made a lot of progress, thanks to good policies here in Washington and the strong response of the market. And now even more dramatic advances are within reach. Tonight, I ask Congress to join me in pursuing a great goal. Let us build on the work we have done and reduce gasoline usage in the United States by 20 percent in the next 10 years. When we do that, we will be cutting our total imports by the equivalent of three-quarters of all the oil we now import from the Middle East.

To reach this goal, we must increase the supply of alternative fuels, by setting a mandatory fuels standard to require 35 billion gallons of renewable and alternative fuels in 2017. And that is nearly five times the current target. At the same time, we need to reform and modernize fuel economy standards for cars the way we did for light trucks, and conserve up to 8½ billion more gallons of gasoline by 2017.

Achieving these ambitious goals will dramatically reduce our dependence on foreign oil, but it is not going to eliminate it. So as we continue to diversify our fuel supply, we must also step up domestic oil production in environmentally sensitive ways. And to further protect America against severe disruptions to our oil supply, I ask Congress to double the current capacity of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

America is on the verge of technological breakthroughs that will enable us to live our lives less dependent on oil. These technologies will help us become better stewards of the environment, and they will help us to confront the serious challenge of global climate change.

A future of hope and opportunity requires a fair, impartial system of justice. The lives of our citizens across our Nation are affected by the outcome of cases pending in our Federal courts. We have a shared obligation to ensure that the Federal courts have enough judges to hear those cases and deliver timely rulings. As president, I have a duty to nominate qualified men and women to vacancies on the Federal bench. And the United States Senate has a duty as well, to give those nominees a fair hearing and a prompt up-or-down vote on the Senate floor.

For all of us in this room, there is no higher responsibility than to protect the people of this country from danger. Five years have come and gone since we saw the scenes and felt the sorrow that the terrorists can cause. We have had time to take stock of our situation. We have added many critical protections to guard the homeland. We know with certainty that the horrors of that September morning were just a glimpse of what the terrorists intend for us, unless we stop them.

With the distance of time, we find ourselves debating the causes of con-

flict and the course we have followed. Such debates are essential when a great democracy faces great questions. Yet one question has surely been settled, that to win the war on terror we must take the fight to the enemy.

From the start, America and our allies have protected our people by staying on the offense. The enemy knows that the days of comfortable sanctuary, easy movement, steady financing, and free-flowing communications are long over. For the terrorists, life since 9/11 has never been the same.

Our success in this war is often measured by the things that did not happen. We cannot know the full extent of the attacks that we and our allies have prevented, but here is some of what we do know: we stopped an al Qaeda plot to fly a hijacked airplane into the tallest building on the west coast. We broke up a Southeast Asian terrorist cell grooming operatives for attacks inside the United States. We uncovered an al Qaeda cell developing anthrax to be used in attacks against America. And just last August, British authorities uncovered a plot to blow up passenger planes bound for America over the Atlantic Ocean. For each life saved, we owe a debt of gratitude to the brave public servants who devote their lives to finding the terrorists and stopping them.

Every success against the terrorists is a reminder of the shoreless ambitions of this enemy. The evil that inspired and rejoiced in 9/11 is still at work in the world. And so long as that is the case, America is still a Nation at war.

In the minds of the terrorists, this war began well before September 11 and will not end until their radical vision is fulfilled. And these past 5 years have given us a much clearer view of the nature of this enemy. Al Qaeda and its followers are Sunni extremists, possessed by hatred and commanded by a harsh and narrow ideology. Take almost any principle of civilization, and their goal is the opposite. They preach with threats, instruct with bullets and bombs, and promise paradise for the murder of the innocent.

Our enemies are quite explicit about their intentions. They want to overthrow moderate governments and establish safe havens from which to plan and carry out new attacks on our country. By killing and terrorizing Americans, they want to force our country to retreat from the world and abandon the cause of liberty. They would then be free to impose their will and spread their totalitarian ideology. Listen to this warning from the late terrorist Zarqawi: "We will sacrifice our blood and bodies to put an end to your dreams, and what is coming is even worse." And Osama bin Laden declared: "Death is better than living on this Earth with the unbelievers among us."

These men are not given to idle words, and they are just one camp in the Islamist radical movement. In recent times, it has also become clear

that we face an escalating danger from Shia extremists who are just as hostile to America and are also determined to dominate the Middle East. Many are known to take direction from the regime in Iran, which is funding and arming terrorists like Hezbollah, a group second only to al Qaeda in the American lives it has taken.

The Shia and Sunni extremists are different faces of the same totalitarian threat. Whatever slogans they chant, when they slaughter the innocent, they have the same wicked purposes. They want to kill Americans, kill democracy in the Middle East, and gain the weapons to kill on an even more horrific scale.

In the sixth year since our Nation was attacked, I wish I could report to you that the dangers had ended. They have not. And so it remains the policy of this government to use every lawful and proper tool of intelligence, diplomacy, law enforcement, and military action to do our duty, to find these enemies, and to protect the American people.

This war is more than a clash of arms. It is a decisive ideological struggle, and the security of our Nation is in the balance. To prevail, we must remove the conditions that inspire blind hatred, and drove 19 men to get onto airplanes and to come and kill us. What every terrorist fears most is human freedom, societies where men and women make their own choices, answer to their own conscience, and live by their hopes instead of their resentments. Free people are not drawn to violent and malignant ideologies, and most will choose a better way when they are given a chance. So we advance our own security interests by helping moderates, reformers, and brave voices for democracy. The great question of our day is whether America will help men and women in the Middle East to build free societies and share in the rights of all humanity. And I say, for the sake of our own security, we must.

In the last 2 years, we have seen the desire for liberty in the broader Middle East, and we have been sobered by the enemy's fierce reaction. In 2005, the world watched as the citizens of Lebanon raised the banner of the Cedar Revolution. They drove out the Syrian occupiers, and chose new leaders in free elections. In 2005, the people of Afghanistan defied the terrorists and elected a democratic legislature. And in 2005, the Iraqi people held three national elections, choosing a transitional government, adopting the most progressive, democratic constitution in the Arab world, and then electing a government under that constitution. Despite endless threats from the killers in their midst, nearly 12 million Iraqi citizens came out to vote in a show of hope and solidarity we should never forget.

A thinking enemy watched all of these scenes, adjusted their tactics, and in 2006 they struck back. In Lebanon, assassins took the life of Pierre

Gemayel, a prominent participant in the Cedar Revolution. Hezbollah terrorists, with support from Syria and Iran, sowed conflict in the region and are seeking to undermine Lebanon's legitimately elected government. In Afghanistan, Taliban and al Qaeda fighters tried to regain power by regrouping and engaging Afghan and NATO forces. In Iraq, al Qaeda and other Sunni extremists blew up one of the most sacred places in Shia Islam, the Golden Mosque of Samarra. This atrocity, directed at a Muslim house of prayer, was designed to provoke retaliation from Iraqi Shia, and it succeeded. Radical Shia elements, some of whom receive support from Iran, formed death squads. The result was a tragic escalation of sectarian rage and reprisal that continues to this day.

This is not the fight we entered in Iraq, but it is the fight we are in. Every one of us wishes that this war were over and won. Yet it would not be like us to leave our promises unkept, our friends abandoned, and our own security at risk. Ladies and gentlemen, on this day, at this hour, it is still within our power to shape the outcome of this battle. Let us find our resolve and turn events toward victory.

We are carrying out a new strategy in Iraq, a plan that demands more from Iraq's elected government and gives our forces in Iraq the reinforcements they need to complete their mission. Our goal is a democratic Iraq that upholds the rule of law, respects the rights of its people, provides them security, and is an ally in the war on terror.

In order to make progress toward this goal, the Iraqi Government must stop the sectarian violence in its capital. But the Iraqis are not yet ready to do this on their own. So we are deploying reinforcements of more than 20,000 additional soldiers and marines to Iraq. The vast majority will go to Baghdad, where they will help Iraqi forces to clear and secure neighborhoods, and serve as advisers embedded in Iraqi Army units. With Iraqis in the lead, our forces will help secure the city by chasing down the terrorists, insurgents, and the roaming death squads. And in Anbar province, where al Qaeda terrorists have gathered and local forces have begun showing a willingness to fight them, we are sending an additional 4,000 United States marines, with orders to find the terrorists and clear them out. We did not drive al Qaeda out of their safe haven in Afghanistan only to let them set up a new safe haven in a free Iraq.

The people of Iraq want to live in peace, and now is the time for their government to act. Iraq's leaders know that our commitment is not open ended. They have promised to deploy more of their own troops to secure Baghdad, and they must do so. They have pledged that they will confront violent radicals of any faction or political party. And they need to follow through and lift needless restrictions

on Iraqi and Coalition forces so these troops can achieve their mission of bringing security to all of the people of Baghdad. Iraq's leaders have committed themselves to a series of benchmarks to achieve reconciliation, to share oil revenues among all of Iraq's citizens, to put the wealth of Iraq into the rebuilding of Iraq, to allow more Iraqis to reenter their nation's civic life, to hold local elections, and to take responsibility for security in every Iraqi province. But for all of this to happen, Baghdad must be secured. And our plan will help the Iraqi Government take back its capital and make good on its commitments.

My fellow citizens, our military commanders and I have carefully weighed the options. We discussed every possible approach. In the end, I chose this course of action because it provides the best chance for success. Many in this Chamber understand that America must not fail in Iraq, because you understand that the consequences of failure would be grievous and far reaching.

If American forces step back before Baghdad is secure, the Iraqi Government would be overrun by extremists on all sides. We could expect an epic battle between Shia extremists backed by Iran, and Sunni extremists aided by al Qaeda and supporters of the old regime. A contagion of violence could spill out across the country, and in time the entire region could be drawn into the conflict.

For America, this is a nightmare scenario. For the enemy, this is the objective. Chaos is their greatest ally in this struggle. And out of chaos in Iraq would emerge an emboldened enemy with new safe havens, new recruits, new resources, and an even greater determination to harm America. To allow this to happen would be to ignore the lessons of September 11 and invite tragedy. And ladies and gentlemen, nothing is more important at this moment in our history than for America to succeed in the Middle East, to succeed in Iraq, and to spare the American people from this danger.

This is where matters stand tonight, in the here and now. I have spoken with many of you in person. I respect you and the arguments you have made. We went into this largely united, in our assumptions and in our convictions. And whatever you voted for, you did not vote for failure. Our country is pursuing a new strategy in Iraq, and I ask you to give it a chance to work. And I ask you to support our troops in the field, and those on their way.

The war on terror we fight today is a generational struggle that will continue long after you and I have turned our duties over to others. That is why it is important to work together so our Nation can see this great effort through. Both parties and both branches should work in close consultation. And this is why I propose to establish a special advisory council on the war on terror, made up of leaders in Congress from both political parties.

We will share ideas for how to position America to meet every challenge that confronts us. And we will show our enemies abroad that we are united in the goal of victory.

One of the first steps we can take together is to add to the ranks of our military, so that the American Armed Forces are ready for all the challenges ahead. Tonight I ask the Congress to authorize an increase in the size of our active Army and Marine Corps by 92,000 in the next 5 years. A second task we can take on together is to design and establish a volunteer civilian reserve corps. Such a corps would function much like our military reserve. It would ease the burden on the Armed Forces by allowing us to hire civilians with critical skills to serve on missions abroad when America needs them. And it would give people across America who do not wear the uniform a chance to serve in the defining struggle of our time.

Americans can have confidence in the outcome of this struggle, because we are not in this struggle alone. We have a diplomatic strategy that is rallying the world to join in the fight against extremism. In Iraq, multinational forces are operating under a mandate from the United Nations, and we are working with Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the gulf states to increase support for Iraq's government. The United Nations has imposed sanctions on Iran and made it clear that the world will not allow the regime in Tehran to acquire nuclear weapons. With the other members of the Quartet, the U.N., the European Union and Russia, we are pursuing diplomacy to help bring peace to the Holy Land, and pursuing the establishment of a democratic Palestinian state living side by side with Israel in peace and security. In Afghanistan, NATO has taken the lead in turning back the Taliban and al Qaeda offensive, the first time the alliance has deployed forces outside the North Atlantic area. Together with our partners in China, Japan, Russia, and South Korea, we are pursuing intensive diplomacy to achieve a Korean Peninsula free of nuclear weapons. And we will continue to speak out for the cause of freedom in places like Cuba, Belarus, and Burma, and continue to awaken the conscience of the world to save the people of Darfur.

American foreign policy is more than a matter of war and diplomacy. Our work in the world is also based on a timeless truth: to whom much is given, much is required. We hear the call to take on the challenges of hunger and poverty and disease, and that is precisely what America is doing. We must continue to fight HIV/AIDS, especially on the continent of Africa. Because you funded our Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the number of people receiving life-saving drugs has grown from 50,000 to more than 800,000 in 3 short years. I ask you to continue funding our efforts to fight HIV/AIDS, and I ask you to provide \$1.2 billion over 5 years so we

can combat malaria in 15 African countries. I ask that you fund the Millennium Challenge Account so that American aid reaches the people who need it, in nations where democracy is on the rise and corruption is in retreat. And let us continue to support the expanded trade and debt relief that are the best hope for lifting lives and eliminating poverty.

When America serves others in this way, we show the strength and generosity of our country. These deeds reflect the character of our people. The greatest strength we have is the heroic kindness, courage, and self-sacrifice of the American people. You see this spirit often if you know where to look, and tonight we need only look above to the gallery.

Dikembe Mutombo grew up in Africa amid great poverty and disease. He came to Georgetown University on a scholarship to study medicine, but Coach John Thompson got a look at Dikembe and had a different idea. Dikembe became a star in the NBA and a citizen of the United States. But he never forgot the land of his birth, or the duty to share his blessings with others. He built a brand-new hospital in his old hometown. A friend has said of this good hearted man: "Mutombo believes that God has given him this opportunity to do great things." And we are proud to call this son of the Congo a citizen of the United States of America.

After her daughter was born, Julie Aigner-Clark searched for ways to share her love of music and art with her child. So she borrowed some equipment and began filming children's videos in her basement. The Baby Einstein Company was born, and in just 5 years her business grew to more than \$20 million in sales. In November 2001, Julie sold Baby Einstein to Walt Disney Company; and with her help, Baby Einstein has grown into a \$200 million business. Julie represents the great enterprising spirit of America. And she is using her success to help others, producing child safety videos with John Walsh of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Julie says of her new project: "I believe it is the most important thing that I have ever done. I believe that children have the right to live in a world that is safe." And so tonight we are pleased to welcome this talented business entrepreneur and generous social entrepreneur, Julie Aigner-Clark.

Three weeks ago, Wesley Autry was waiting at a Harlem subway station with his two little girls, when he saw a man fall into the path of a train. With seconds to act, Wesley jumped onto the tracks, pulled the man into the space between the rails, and held him as the train passed right above their heads. He insists he is not a hero. He says: "We got guys and girls overseas dying for us to have our freedoms. We have got to show each other some love." There is something wonderful about a country that produces a brave and humble man like Wesley Autry.

Tommy Rieman was a teenager pumping gas in Independence, Kentucky, when he enlisted in the United States Army. In December 2003, he was on a reconnaissance mission in Iraq when his team came under heavy enemy fire. From his Humvee, Sergeant Rieman returned fire. He used his body as a shield to protect his gunner. He was shot in the chest and arm, and received shrapnel wounds to his legs, yet he refused medical attention and stayed in the fight. He helped to repel a second attack, firing grenades at the enemy's position. For his exceptional courage, Sergeant Rieman was awarded the Silver Star. And like so many other Americans who have volunteered to defend us, he has earned the respect and the gratitude of our whole country.

In such courage and compassion, ladies and gentlemen, we see the spirit and character of America, and these qualities are not in short supply. This is a decent and honorable country, and resilient, too. We have been through a lot together. We have met challenges and faced dangers, and we know that more lie ahead. Yet we can go forward with confidence, because the state of our Union is strong, our cause in the world is right, and tonight that cause goes on. God bless. Thank you for your prayers. Thank you.

(Applause, the Members rising.)

At 10 o'clock and 8 minutes p.m., the President of the United States, accompanied by the committee of escort, retired from the Hall of the House of Representatives.

The Deputy Sergeant at Arms escorted the invited guests from the Chamber in the following order:

The Members of the President's Cabinet; Chief Justice of the United States and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court; the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps.

JOINT SESSION DISSOLVED

The SPEAKER. The Chair declares the joint session of the two Houses now dissolved.

Accordingly, at 10 o'clock and 9 minutes p.m., the joint meeting of the two Houses was dissolved.

The Members of the Senate retired to their Chamber.

MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE ON THE STATE OF THE UNION

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, I move that the message of the President be referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed.

The motion was agreed to.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. LUCAS (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of family illness.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WATERS, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. KUCINICH, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Member (at the request of Mr. CONAWAY) to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. CONAWAY, for 5 minutes, today.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 10 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, January 24, 2007, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

387. A letter from the Chief Counsel/FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Final Flood Elevation Determinations — received November 28, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

388. A letter from the Chief Counsel/FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Suspension of Community Eligibility [Docket No. FEMA-7951] received November 28, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

389. A letter from the Chief Counsel/FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Final Flood Elevation Determinations — received November 20, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

390. A letter from the Chief Counsel/FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Suspension of Community Eligibility [Docket No. FEMA-7945] received October 18, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

391. A letter from the Chief Counsel/FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — National Flood Insurance Program; Appeal of Decisions Relating to Flood Insurance Claims (RIN: 1660-AA41) received October 30, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

392. A letter from the Chief Counsel/FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Changes in Flood Elevation Determinations [Docket No. FEMA-B-7466] received November 20, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

393. A letter from the Chief Counsel/FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Final Flood Elevation Determinations — received November 2, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

394. A letter from the Chief Counsel/FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Final Flood Elevation Determinations — received November 2, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

395. A letter from the Chief Counsel/FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Final Flood Elevation Determinations — received November 2, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

396. A letter from the Chief Counsel/FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Final Flood Elevation Determinations — received November 2, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

397. A letter from the Chief Counsel/FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Final Flood Elevation Determinations — received November 2, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

398. A letter from the Chief Counsel/FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Final Flood Elevation Determinations — received November 2, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

399. A letter from the Chief Counsel/FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Final Flood Elevation Determinations — received November 2, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

400. A letter from the Chief Counsel/FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Final Flood Elevation Determinations — received November 2, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

401. A letter from the Chief Counsel/FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Final Flood Elevation Determinations — November 20, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

402. A letter from the Chief Counsel/FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Changes in Flood Elevation Determinations [Docket No. FEMA-B-7467] received November 20, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

403. A letter from the Chief Counsel/FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Final Flood Elevation Determinations — received November 20, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

404. A letter from the Chief Counsel/FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Final Flood Elevation Determinations — received November 28, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C.

801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

405. A letter from the Chief Counsel/FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Final Flood Elevation Determinations — received November 28, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

406. A letter from the General Counsel, National Credit Union Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Conversion of Insured Credit Unions to Mutual Savings Banks (RIN: 3133-AD16) received January 19, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 86. Resolution providing for consideration of the resolution (H. Res. 78) amending the Rules of the House of Representatives to permit Delegates and the Resident Commissioner to the Congress to cast votes in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union (Rept. 110-3). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. FLAKE (for himself, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. TERRY, Mr. RADANOVICH, Mr. CAMPBELL of California, Mr. FORTUÑO, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. PENCE, Mr. SALI, Mr. BILBRAY, Mr. WALBERG, and Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland):

H.R. 631. A bill to prohibit Federal agencies from obligating funds for earmarks included only in congressional reports, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. LIPINSKI (for himself, Mr. INGLES of South Carolina, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, Mr. DENT, Mr. EHLERS, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. TERRY, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, Mr. GERLACH, Mr. CAMP of Michigan, Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. REICHERT, Mr. WOLF, Mr. WICKER, Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois, Mr. SOUDER, Mr. KUHL of New York, Mr. WYNN, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. KINGSTON, Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS of Tennessee, Mr. ARCURI, and Mr. WAMP):

H.R. 632. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Energy to establish monetary prizes for achievements in overcoming scientific and technical barriers associated with hydrogen energy; to the Committee on Science and Technology.

By Mr. VAN HOLLEN (for himself, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. COHEN, Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. SESTAK, Ms. GIFFORDS, Mr. MCNULTY, and Mrs. DAVIS of California):

H.R. 633. A bill to amend the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 to require lobbyists to disclose the candidates, leadership PACs, and political party committees for whom they collect or arrange contributions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MOORE of Kansas (for himself and Mr. KIRK):

H.R. 634. A bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of veterans who became disabled for life while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. UPTON (for himself, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. PLATTS, Mrs. EMERSON, Mr. LATOURETTE, Mr. REGULA, Mrs. BIGGERT, Mr. EHLERS, Mr. GILCHREST, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. HOEKSTRA, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. RAMSTAD, Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, and Mr. DONNELLY):

H.R. 635. A bill to amend the Clean Air Act to require that, after the year 2012, all gasoline sold to consumers in the United States for motor vehicles contain not less than 10 percent renewable fuel, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mrs. BACHMANN (for herself, Mr. AKIN, Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. CARTER, Mr. CONAWAY, Mrs. CUBIN, Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. FEENEY, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. GINGREY, Mr. GILLMOR, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. GRAVES, Mr. HALL of Texas, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. JONES of North Carolina, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. PAUL, Mr. PENCE, Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. RADANOVICH, Mr. ROHRBACHER, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. TERRY, Mr. WELLER, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. PLATTS, Mr. FLAKE, and Mr. WELDON of Florida):

H.R. 636. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to improve health care choice by providing for the tax deductibility of medical expenses by individuals; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. HERSETH:

H.R. 637. A bill to grant a Federal charter to the National American Indian Veterans, Incorporated; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. JINDAL:

H.R. 638. A bill to amend the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 to improve efforts to reduce gang activity and violent crime; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. JINDAL:

H.R. 639. A bill to designate as HUBZones the disaster areas associated with Hurricanes Katrina and Rita; to the Committee on Small Business.

By Mr. JINDAL:

H.R. 640. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permit financial institutions to determine their interest expense deduction without regard to tax-exempt bonds issued to provide certain small loans for health care or educational purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. JINDAL:

H.R. 641. A bill to clarify the tax treatment of certain payments made to homeowners by the Louisiana Recovery Authority and the Mississippi Development Authority; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mrs. JONES of Ohio (for herself and Mr. WHITFIELD):

H.R. 642. A bill to establish a demonstration incentive program within the Department of Education to promote installation of fire sprinkler systems, or other fire suppression or prevention technologies, in qualified student housing and dormitories, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mrs. JONES of Ohio (for herself and Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin):

H.R. 643. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for collegiate housing and infrastructure grants; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California (for himself, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. BACHUS, Ms. WATERS, Mr. KANJORSKI, Mr. SOUDER, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. McHUGH, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. SHAYS, and Mr. TURNER):

H.R. 644. A bill to facilitate the provision of assistance by the Department of Housing and Urban Development for the cleanup and economic redevelopment of brownfields; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. PRICE of North Carolina (for himself, Mr. MILLER of North Carolina, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. FATTAH, and Mr. BISHOP of New York):

H.R. 645. A bill to provide for the withdrawal of United States Armed Forces from Iraq, to authorize assistance for Iraq, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky (for himself, Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky, Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky, Mr. WHITFIELD, Mr. CHANDLER, and Mr. YARMUTH):

H.R. 646. A bill to establish the Kentucky Artisan Heritage Trails National Heritage Area Act in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Ms. WATERS (for herself, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, and Ms. PRYCE of Ohio):

H.R. 647. A bill to extend for 5 years the Mark-to-Market program of the Department of Housing and Urban Development; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. YOUNG of Alaska:

H.R. 648. A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts:

H. Con. Res. 41. Concurrent resolution providing for a conditional adjournment of the House of Representatives; considered and agreed to.

By Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York:

H. Con. Res. 42. Concurrent resolution honoring the heroic service and sacrifice of the 6,500 glider pilots of the United States Army Air Forces during World War II; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. PAUL (for himself, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Mr. GILCHREST, Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. DUNCAN, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. JONES of North Carolina, and Mr. TAYLOR):

H. Con. Res. 43. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the President should implement Recommendation 9 of the Iraq Study Group Report; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. EMANUEL:

H. Res. 85. A resolution electing Members to certain standing committees of the House of Representatives; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. KNOLLENBERG:

H. Res. 87. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that all Americans should participate in a moment of silence to reflect upon the service and sacrifice of members of the United States Armed Forces both at home and abroad; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida (for herself, Mr. SHAYS, Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, Mr. CASTLE, Mrs. MUSGRAVE, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mrs. MYRICK, Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, Mr. PORTER, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. PITTS, and Mr. JINDAL):

H. Res. 88. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Members of the House are not immune from having their offices searched; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. HOEKSTRA (for himself and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

H. Res. 89. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that a day should be established as Dutch-American Friendship Day to celebrate the historic ties of the United States and the Netherlands; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Ms. KILPATRICK (for herself, Mr. LIPINSKI, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. BACA, Ms. CARSON, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. KIRK, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. SERRANO, Ms. WATSON, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Mr. FILNER):

H. Res. 90. A resolution congratulating Lovie Smith of the Chicago Bears and Tony Dungy of the Indianapolis Colts on becoming the first African-American head coaches of National Football League teams to qualify for the Super Bowl; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. SALAZAR:

H. Res. 91. A resolution demanding the return of the U.S.S. Pueblo the United States Navy from North Korea; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 14: Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN and Mr. TIAHRT.

H.R. 19: Mr. KNOLLENBERG.

H.R. 25: Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee.

H.R. 65: Mr. STARK.

H.R. 81: Mr. HAYES.

H.R. 89: Mr. MCINTYRE.

H.R. 114: Mr. REYNOLDS.

H.R. 135: Mrs. NAPOLITANO.

H.R. 172: Ms. CASTOR and Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin.

H.R. 180: Mr. MICHAUD, Mr. WYNN, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas.

H.R. 190: Mr. WALBERG and Mr. GOODE.

H.R. 192: Mr. PLATTS.

H.R. 195: Mr. MILLER of Florida.

H.R. 207: Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. McDERMOTT, Mr. FARR, and Mr. CONYERS.

H.R. 211: Mrs. LOWEY and Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee.

H.R. 251: Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. GILLMOR, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mrs. LOWEY, and Mr. GALLEGLY.

H.R. 277: Mr. CARNAHAN and Ms. SHEA-PORTER.

H.R. 303: Mr. WEXLER, Mr. MCINTYRE, and Mr. YOUNG of Florida.

H.R. 312: Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN.

H.R. 346: Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. MILLER of Florida, and Mr. LANGEVIN.

H.R. 359: Mr. FILNER, Mrs. CAPPS, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Ms. LEE, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, and Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California.

H.R. 369: Ms. WOOLSEY and Ms. BERKLEY.

H.R. 373: Mr. PENCE.

H.R. 374: Mr. PENCE.

H.R. 379: Mr. PENCE.

H.R. 404: Mr. CARTER.
H.R. 418: Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. HINOJOSA, and Mr. UPTON.
H.R. 439: Ms. CASTOR, Ms. WATSON, and Mr. BUTTERFIELD.
H.R. 473: Mr. GOODLATTE.
H.R. 477: Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. TERRY, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GORDON, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. WEINER, Mr. LANTOS, Mrs. JONES of Ohio, and Mr. PAYNE.
H.R. 493: Mr. WEINER, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. PALLONE, and Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 511: Mr. LAHOOD, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. SHADEGG, Mr. POE, Ms. FOXX, Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. DENT, Mr. HASTERT, Mr. GERLACH, and Mr. INGLIS of South Carolina.
H.R. 526: Ms. SUTTON.
H.R. 562: Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky.
H.R. 579: Mr. KUHLMAN of New York, Mr. HAYES, Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS of Tennessee, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mrs. MALONEY of New York,

Mr. ETHERIDGE, Mr. FARR, Mr. DEFazio, Mr. TAYLOR, Mr. MCINTYRE, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. BOUCHER, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, and Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts.
H.R. 582: Mr. BUTTERFIELD and Mr. PAYNE.
H.R. 592: Mr. ROTHMAN and Mrs. MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 599: Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California and Mr. BILIRAKIS.
H.R. 617: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. BOYD of Florida, and Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida.
H.R. 627: Mr. ROSS and Ms. ESHOO.
H.J. Res. 14: Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. FORTUÑO, and Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.J. Res. 19: Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. GRAVES, and Mr. JONES of North Carolina.
H. Con. Res. 7: Mr. DOYLE.
H. Con. Res. 21: Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. GERLACH, Mr. CARDOZA, WAMP, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. CANNON, Mr. SMITH of New Jer-

sey, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mrs. EMERSON, Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Ms. SCHWARTZ, Mr. ACKERMAN, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. FILLNER, Mr. RODRIGUEZ, Mr. SIREN, Mr. BISHOP of New York, and Mrs. DAVIS of California.

H. Con. Res. 37: Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. GINGREY, Mr. JONES of North Carolina, and Mr. POE.

H. Res. 16: Mr. SCOTT of Virginia.

H. Res. 41: Mrs. MALONEY of New York and Mr. COURTNEY.

H. Res. 51: Mr. STUPAK.

DELETIONS OF SPONSORS FROM PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were deleted from public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 65: Mr. TANNER.

H.R. 217: Mr. CROWLEY.